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THE UNPARDONABLE WAR

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"The Arizona was gliding toward the shattered, massive wreck."

THE UNPARDONABLE WAR

BY

JAMES BARNES

AUTHOR OF "YANKEE SHIPS AND YANKEE SAILORS,"
"DRAKE AND HIS YEOMEN," ETC.

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
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THE UNPARDONABLE WAR

THE UNPARDONABLE WAR

CHAPTER I

THE TRIUMPH OF THE PEOPLE'S PARTY

WHEN in 19— the third ticket, the "People's Party," triumphed at the end of the presidential campaign, there were, of course, reasons and excuses given on both sides.

The fact that the Republican Party had unexpectedly split upon a national issue, and that the regular Democratic candidate had been stricken with what appeared to be a mortal illness five days before the election, certainly bore great effect upon the result.

The union of the labour interests, the "Union," "Knights," "Federation," and "Amalgamations," who voted together as one man, with the remnants of the so-called "Populists" and extreme Socialists, had been the beginning of the People's Party movement. But upon the sudden retirement (for that is what it amounted to) of the Democratic candidate, it is safe to say fully two-thirds of the regular Democrats had turned to

the standard of "The Party of the People." Still more surprising, however, had been the almost complete alliance of many of the Western states with this same ticket that frankly represented the ranks of the disgruntled.

There had been much open talk of the West against the East in the earlier stages of the campaign; but, to tell the truth, the issue that had split the Republican ranks had little to do with this particular departure, which was sectional in its character and sentimental in its foundations. The conflicting issues had been the old ones of tariff reform, further colonial expansion, a closer surveillance of trusts, corporations, and syndicates, and, since the strictly discriminating tariffs of Germany, France, and Russia, the question of a commercial and international alliance with England. Had not the unforeseen circumstances just related taken place, it is more than probable that the conservative element of the regular party would have been victorious. Long, however, before the returns were all in, on that memorable election night, the result was apparent. A man, not the creature of an accident, not a stop-gap, not the captain of a forlorn hope, but known for some time as a successful leader in the fields of labour organization and agitation, was hailed as "The People's Choice," and awoke to find himself the Chief Executive-elect of the nation!

The first sign of the radical departure from old traditions had been in the choice of the presidential Cabinet. It cannot be said that the appointments were viewed in many directions with anything less than sheer alarm. The bitter cartoons and serious caricatures of the time in the partisan press prove this at a glance.

The House of Representatives and the Senate, by the very nature of things, were almost at loggerheads. In the House, the older Democrats and Republicans taken together formed a slight minority. In the Senate, under the new laws regulating the election of senators, affairs were at a deadlock, owing to the fact that the majority of the Western senators were pledged to the support of the new party. There was but one official of high office of the old régime who remained in power, — the Postmaster-General, — who, being a great friend of the Vice-President, had been retained, it was rumoured, as a special favour. But such wholesale giving away of offices and effective working of the spoils system was never seen before.

Foreign ministers and ambassadors were recalled, and in their stead were placed men whose qualifications were political entirely.

The ambassador to England was a gentleman from Texas, whose chief renown came from his fiery speeches, his raucous voice, and a peculiar

style of habiliment. He had once been engaged in the harmless occupation of sheep-raising, it was told, and so it was supposed that his boasts would not be idle when he had stated on the floor of the House, "No darn Britisher would pull the wool over his eyes," and he had promised that if he ever appeared at Court, "It would be in long pants, by gum, sir; without a gimcrack sword."

To Germany was sent the editor of a German American news sheet, and to France a man whose English verbs were sometimes irregular, and who had never wrestled, even in his early youth, with the difficulties of the language of politeness.

The results promised to be amusing, no doubt, if not serious, and the discussions of these appointments furnished food for gossip in all the clubs and gathering places, and for much spirited cartooning and caricaturing in the press.

Even some of the "yellow journals" could not treat the matter in altogether a serious vein. With the exception of two, they reported interviews and personal items about the new style of diplomats, with an undercurrent of humorous suggestion.

But, as was expected, the funny side of the matter was soon lost in serious consideration. When the irresponsible departmental busybodies began to juggle with delicate questions, the results began to show. The stock market, for some

time depressed after feverish weeks of uncertainty, fell dull as dish-water, and then slowly shares in what had always been considered, and what actually were, "gilt-edged securities" began to decline. This was during the period of uneasiness, before anything very startling had been done. No doubt it was a natural sequence of a change of administration, and was enhanced by fears of radical departures in the way of tariff meddling and restricting legislation, and there was at first nothing like the panic that it was prophesied would have immediately followed the election of the free-silver candidate, had he been successful in those well-remembered campaigns a score or more years previously. But there was a certain reason for the sharp decline in profit-taking and in the converting of securities into ready cash. The departure of many wealthy men with their families for indefinite visits abroad followed just at the time they should have stayed at home.

The Morning Voice, the great popular newspaper, had been in existence for five years only, and it claimed already to have a circulation twice that of any other daily paper published in the metropolis. Its two nearest rivals had denied this claim in columns of sworn figures, and a Western paper published in Chicago, named *The Verdict*, had also spoken for itself; but it was not long in leaking out that this last-named sheet

was under the same management, and certainly its teachings, its threatenings, and general tone and colour gave evidence of the fact. During the campaign *The Voice* and *The Verdict* had worked together, hand in glove, and now they were the chief supporting organs of the Government, and the only ones, perhaps, except those outspokenly devoted to the specific teachings of socialistic ideas, that saw no danger nor humour in the situation.

Legislation, compelling all strikes and troubles between employee and employer to be settled by an arbitration committee appointed by the state, in conjunction with another committee appointed by the labour organization representing the cause of grievance, promised to do away with strikes entirely, from the very fact that there would be but one verdict rendered, and that in favour of the strikers. A labour law was passed, making it practically a misdemeanour for any one to work more than eight hours on five days of the week and four hours on Saturday, except in case of direst necessity. Every firm or corporation employing men who laboured with their hands, or who tended machinery, was compelled to submit sworn copies of their receipts and expenditures. A *pro rata* wage was fixed *per capita* in proportion to their earnings, the main idea being that no more than six per cent dividends

on the par value of any common stock should be declared, a curtailment of many vast private fortunes and incomes, and in the Supreme Court the matter was fought in a long-remembered action. But the fatal blow at the highest judiciary was soon struck: two justices were appointed to the Supreme Court bench by the President — one a political judge from a New York municipal district, and the other a Southerner from Louisiana, whose ruling had often been revoked. Before the second year of the administration had gone by, affairs promised to reach a crisis. The import duties on all articles, that by the widest and most elastic construction of a definition could come under the heading "luxuries," were increased. Imports in certain directions became prohibitive, and ceased. Failures and bankruptcies throughout the country grew to be common, and though the money standard remained untouched, the money market became more stringent. Nothing was done to meet the emergency. Speculation ceased entirely; "little men" were wiped out completely, the passage of the modified "Aldrich bill" during the last administration had tempered the wind, but further investment of capital in new enterprises came to an end. There grew to be less and less demand for articles of domestic manufacture that did not come under the head of "necessities," and there was a marked deteriora-

tion in methods of workmanship and a careless
of construction everywhere evident.

But, notwithstanding the natural depres
uneasiness and bitter feeling everywhere pr
lent, for some time during the earlier month
the administration, there had been no signs
there was any lack of gayety in the nation. N
were there so many free concerts; never
there so many projects for public parks and
ple's playgrounds; and never, apparently,
the "common people" so contented and so
entertained.

In many states a new aristocracy of poli
bossism and labour leadership had grown into
istence that for a long time had been a fam
practice in the great cities. There was m
scandal; corruption was universal, official robb
ill-concealed. There came to be a rivalry in
way of public entertaining, an open bidding
the political market for votes and popularity
extended to the smallest office that promised
quisite or emolument. There were free base
games and free theatrical exhibitions, free ex
sions, free ice, and free liquors. The worth
probity of a candidate counted for little so l
as he loudly proclaimed and upheld the popu
misconception of "liberty." As it had long b
the criterion for power in the social world, s
had come to be in the world of politics—

palm to him that gave the largest entertainments.

But slowly and surely the reaction began to assert itself in many directions. The failure of many large business houses, the falling off of traffic and decrease in railway earnings, the shutting down — out of necessity — of so many manufactories and industries, began to throw thousands of unemployed men upon the labour market. Their funds having given out, they were willing to work for what they could get, but their successful brethren prohibited them. No man could take the place of a discharged workman, without an appeal to the labour bureau; and no workman could be successfully discharged until his case had come before the investigating committee. The unemployed gravitated naturally toward the big cities, but outside of them the human flotsam and jetsam of unfortunates began to live upon the farmers and the country. From many quarters came the cry, "Help, help, the wolf is at the door!"

Crimes of violence appeared to be on the increase. The black population in the South, who could find little work, soon became a source of menacing danger; riots, lynchings, and burnings increased in number.

Just at this time, following false rumours of a probable European war, came the news of a coali-

tion of the European Powers, formed principally against the increasing domination of the Anglo-Saxon. The unexpected ending of the Russo-Japanese War had added to the prestige of the English-speaking peoples.

England was once more at the height of her prosperity. She now forged ahead as the United States fell back. Under wise and able management, developed at last out of a tangle of early blunderings, her colonies had grown in importance, and with America they had shared the European market and controlled the great commerce that had developed in the Orient. South Africa had unexpectedly proved, not only to be a source of tremendous wealth where minerals were concerned, for the discovery of great coal beds and new gold fields had enhanced all property values, but under the new systems of labour and irrigation she had become a factor in the feeding of the world, and the improved quality of her cotton made her a rival to the South. In India there had been no famine for more than a decade, and droughts had been few and rare.

The fleet of Great Britain was more powerful than ever before, and her commercial marine — in connection and in combination with that suddenly developed in America — had, up to the ascendency of the People's Party, controlled the carrying trade. Her national finances were on

a sound and solid basis, and Government leadership for ten years had been in able hands.

Ireland alone had not shared in the tide of prosperity. Despite the late concessions, political agitation, fostered and kept alive for the most part in America, had held her in a state of uncertainty. The old stripe of reformer was still a power in his own country and abroad, and something of an irritation in Parliament.

The new ambassador to England from the United States had been cordially received. The mere mistakes of his that had sprung from a lack of knowledge were condoned with and smiled at good-naturedly. By reason of them, we had gained at first a peculiar notoriety that amounted almost to popularity, and, as such, of course, it pleased him. But a man of his aggressive quality could not be expected long to keep out of hot water. His manner of presentation of claims against the crown, in relation to a small matter in a fisheries seizure off the coast of Newfoundland, caused much constrained feeling, and an interview with him that was published in *The Voice* and in *The Verdict* further accentuated British public sentiment. But he had the powerful backing of the administration and was careless of results.

Soon he was to have an opportunity for further exhibitions of his own peculiar brand of new diplo-

macy, for it was just at this time that the troubles at Dawson City and along the Yukon began to brew. No one supposed, however, that they would develop into anything serious, the spread-eagle utterances of a portion of the American press were supposed to be understood at their full value by the English Government, that was disposed to be charitable, although the cordial hand clasp was broken.

A controversy that had promised to arise over the newly opened Panama Canal, and that had looked threatening, had been amicably settled, without even a flutter, during the last administration, and the tempest in the distant teapot was not at first regarded very seriously. But the press had assumed an attitude that moulded public opinion to bitterness.

It was just at this period, the ending of the third year of the administration, that this story opens; when the germs of dislike and distrust were ready to spread a universal ill-feeling that might be changed to hatred.

CHAPTER II

IN NEWSPAPER ROW

THE *Voice* building, like many of the older homes of the daily press, looked down upon the old City Hall Park. It was not so tall as many of its neighbours, but it had better title, perhaps, to claims of architectural beauty. It was solidly built, with a handsome, well-balanced façade, and the various floors, instead of being a hodge-podge of many schemes of ornamental development, were uniform and interdependent.

It was gratifying to look upon when one compared it with the huge chimneys of brick, stone, and glass that spired up into the air on either side of it. It interpreted the better combination of metal and stone work, and was more of a monument to the art of modern building than were the hideous creations of twenty years before. It was made for its purpose; the huge presses in the basement gave not an evidence of their presence, there was not a tremor or a vibration perceptible. The smooth-running hydraulic lifts had none of the sickening, uncertain sway of the older style. The marble corridors were wide and

airy, and the offices that opened from them were spacious and well furnished. There was nothing of the cluttered and ink-bespattered appearance of newspaperdom; no hurried crossings from one department to another; no old-fashioned, grimy printer's devils trailing fluttering pennants of galley proof from the composing room to the office. All moved like clockwork; it was the acme of newspaper management.

In a room on the fourteenth floor, which was next but one to the highest, in the private sanctum of the editor-in-chief, were three men. At the end of the table sat the editor, a tall, thin, smooth-shaven man with a remarkably small head, a large nose, cold, deep-set eyes, and a big, well-developed, and strongly moulded chin. His wide mouth had a way of moving slightly at the corners when he was thinking or listening. It was as if he had a joke on the universe that he was constantly repressing. When he spoke, it was in dry, short, decided sentences, emphasized by quick snaps of the under jaw. But despite the humorous suggestion of the ever present joke, if he laughed at all, it was merely with his eyes that gave gleams of a cynically humorous appreciation.

A large man, in a tightly buttoned black coat, was pacing up and down the soft carpeted floor. The assistant editor was seated by the window, and, although the large man was talking volubly,

the assistant's eye was upon the editor. It appeared as if he had to listen through the editor's ears entirely, as if the slightly moving corners of the mouth might tell him something that otherwise he might not understand. Suddenly the large man stopped and coming close to the table leaned forward on his knuckles, wagging his head from left to right.

"It is the opportunity, gentlemen," he said. "I assure you that it is. Don't let the matter rest. Stir them up! Stir them up! The pot must be kept boiling, or the fat will be in the fire! And let me tell you this," he added, "my friend the secretary understands the matter well — Monihan is with us heart and soul."

There was evident in the speaker's tone that peculiar intonation that proved his ancestry; little touches of original brogue crept in here and there — it showed plainly in the broad diapason of his sentences.

"Mr. Brady," spoke the editor at last, shooting a glance at him, "I understand all this, as well as you do, but we must not be rash. You cannot force people to take your views at once; you must lead them to see things with your eyes, to hear with your ears. What you want is —"

The big man interrupted him. "What I want is war-r!"

He rolled the final "r" with a flourish as if he

had waved a challenging flag. The editor shifted a quick glance out of the window. Then he spoke dryly, as if half to himself: —

"I can't declare war, off-hand, man — you're crazy! Nor can Mr. Monihan, nor the President. Congress alone can do that."

"But you can lead up to it, sure. Let the people demand it, and Congress will obey."

"Do you think so? Perhaps."

The editor did not appear to wish to enter into any argument, that was plain enough, and, judging from the behaviour of his listeners, Mr. Brady's impassioned speech had fallen on cold ears. He struck the table again, and his voice now sank to a soft, persuasive whisper.

"What I mean to tell you, Mr. Whalen, is just this. . . . I give it to you straight — the administration is with you heart and soul. Give them no time. Canada is at our mercy any day next week. Diplomatically it could all be arranged. Sure, there would be little bloodshed, and there the war would stop. England would listen to reason."

"And Ireland would be free," returned the editor, without a smile.

"Sure, fair exchange is no robbery," flared the Irishman. "England would listen to reason then. Do you think they are satisfied with the sop of 1903? That's all I came to tell, — the

administration is with you; the President will fall in line; Congress will obey. And now, gentlemen," he added, picking up his hat, "I leave you alone to think of that; but I repeat what I said before: 'Stir them up now, hit hard and often, the power is back of you.'" He paused at the door. "I'm here in the secretary's private car," he said, "and return to Washington to-night. I will make report, I will see Mr. Monihan to-morrow; he has his finger on the pulse of the legislature, the Cabinet meets next week. Good day to you. Remember, Mr. Whalen; now's the time." With that he left the room, the heavy door closing softly behind him.

No sooner had he gone than the younger man leaned back in his chair and laughed.

"Ireland forever!" he chuckled.

The editor appeared for a moment as if he was about to relax; his small eyes twinkled, but he shifted the subject instantly.

"There's news from the Northwest, Stannard," he said. "A despatch from Siever. It was in cipher. I'll read the gist of it."

Going to a big cabinet, he took from a drawer a few pages of closely written matter and spread them out on the table before him.

"Siever says, in short, that things are approaching a crisis. Here, read the despatch yourself. I do not doubt for an instant that there will

be an attack made before the next twelve hours. We are preparing advance sheets, are we not?"

"Yes, Siever has worked them up properly," observed the assistant editor, taking over the extended papers. "He deserves to be well remembered, eh?"

"What a fool this Brady is," the editor went on, not answering, "to think that any war will stop at Canada or Ireland. That is not what we want — damn Ireland, with the rest," he added. "We want a war that will be a *war*, that will deal England as heavy a blow as it will deal America; give and take all around, and the more of it the more it will suit us. To quote Brady's words, 'A fair exchange is no robbery,' and I see what the administration wants and what many a member of Congress and many a senator wants, too — they must save their chestnuts. If they have nothing to divert the public mind, there will be such an on-sweep at the polls that the People's Party would no more be heard of. I know one or two things that Brady and his friends haven't the least idea of. They've gone in too deep. They must divert the public mind — so far as it has one."

"No hard task, from what we have discovered," murmured Stannard.

"No, but the strange thing is that he takes me for an Irishman when I'm a citizen of the world,"

remarked the editor, and his lips moved slightly as if this time he had included himself in the universal joke. "The world," he continued slowly, smiling, "especially this country, is full of fools, — fools, madmen, and knaves. Honestly, sometimes I believe that I am the only sane, clear-sighted person in it."

"And of course the only honest one!" Stannard sneered.

"Not in the least, neither are you. But that's where we have the advantage of the rest — we know our dishonesty. We revel in it. Speaking from an abstract moral standpoint, we are two of the greatest villains unhung."

"Oh, see here, Whalen," began the younger man, with a gesture of resentment.

"I mean it, now I'm started," went on the editor. "I was born, I believe, without a conscience; I bought yours for a sum, so you don't own any — that was the agreement, wasn't it? Surely you don't regret. Patriotism was barred."

"I may have grown wiser."

"Wisdom that causes us uneasiness is folly with a frown; but I grow epigrammatic, and cheap epigrams are your forte, Stannard; you are paid to write them. Think of those virtuous editorials that you don't believe in, and turn out so readily."

The assistant editor bridled. "We will get

nothing out of a conversation like this, Whalen," he began.

"No, I suppose not; but it amuses me," interrupted the editor.

Stannard flared angrily. "Come down to facts then, and drop generalizations. I really don't care for —"

"No, you really don't care for anything except what I do — that's the frame of mind I want to see you in, Stannard. Money and power, that's what we want — let us be honest. There is a lot more harm we can do." Whalen half laughed. "Oh, the fools, the fools, that live in this great country of ours!"

"Ours! Yours! You have no country!"

"True, I never had one; I am the son of an Irish renegade who married the daughter of a Boer politician — there's a combination for you. I was born in an African wilderness; I was brought up in a republic that never was a republic and that no longer exists; I was educated in France and Scotland. I've been in this country twenty years, but I'm not a citizen. I don't care for it; no more do you, for your citizenship. Now, to-morrow morning, a patriotic leader, — 'The Eagle Outraged,' 'The British Lion rampant for the Eagle's blood,' — put all your soul in it; quiver with suppressed indignation. As Brady says, 'stir them up, the adminis-

tration is with you.' We will print the same thing in *The Verdict* and scatter it broadcast. Tell a people how happy they are, and they won't believe you; tell them they're down-trodden, imposed upon, and they will hail you chief."

"How about Buhler and Bodkin? Will you give them an answer?"

"All in good time; they are in our hands; we have the front page insert ready — of the discovery of the plot of the three new allies, — Russia, France, and Germany, — forsooth! to bring about a war between this country and England. Publish that, and there would be — "

"There would be no war — "

"Precisely, but I think there will. What would you say if I told you that Buhler and Bodkin are stockholders now; and if they promise — "

"What?"

"Forty millions to the management of the *Voice* syndicate the day war is declared — hell's fire! you know the position we were in three months ago, — notes to meet, mortgages coming due, sales falling off, advertising dead, expenses increasing. We had to stave them off somehow. The campaign money was gone. The local papers we control want further loans."

"What did you get for your stock?" asked Stannard, interrupting.

"I wouldn't take less than par, of course," Whalen replied. "It isn't worth ten cents. Every penny that ever came in I put back into this paper. People thought there was money behind it."

"Well, what was there?"

"Brains, and a marketable commodity."

"Of what?"

"Twaddle, rot, sensation, and lies; a babbling condescension of advice; just the stuff you know how to write, devise, and concoct, Stannard; just what we trained our cubs to give us; what you have been paid a salary of twenty-five thousand dollars for. I haven't spent a fifth of that sum on myself. But now we are going to pull out — we are going to be rich; beginning to-morrow your salary is doubled. You are the cleverest journalist of a certain kind in the world."

"And you are?"

"I am the most unscrupulous white man — I'm the Syndicate!" Whalen answered. "Oh, what a pleasure it is to talk frankly and to believe everything you say! That interview with Captain Frye of the *Cumberland* appears in the evening issue, doesn't it?"

"Yes."

"You have made it subtle and bombastic?"

"I think it will fill the bill."

"It was an accident, wasn't it?"

"I should suppose so. But I intend to make it appear that he wished to block the canal."

"Capital! We will declare war in about five weeks — perhaps five days."

"Don't you think you are overrating yourself, Whalen?"

"Not in the least; Smith, of the old *Yellow*, once told me that his paper declared war against Spain seven times before the Government followed suit — and that was a pretty sensible Government, too."

"War would never have happened if the *Maine* had not been blown up," ventured Stannard.

"Smith was the most resourceful journalist of his time, of a certain kind," answered Whalen. "If there had been no war, his paper would have gone under — so will ours, now. Why, look! If such a man as McKinley could not stand the popular clamour, what will such a hodge-podge of blatherskites, demagogues, visionaries, and ignoramuses as we have now at Washington do? They will obey the sovereign *Voice* and *The Verdict* — of the people who put them there. Besides, some of them want it. That ass Brady spoke the truth."

Stannard, who had been looking at the editor with a grim smile of admiration, assumed an air of gravity.

"Don't you think this is a tremendous responsibility?" he asked.

"Responsibility!" echoed the editor. "That's right. Look at it humorously. The country is in a magnificently bad way. Something is going to happen — it's got to. There's something pretty rotten down in Washington. But I don't have to argue with you, thank Heaven! You're paid for — but, supposing I had to, I might venture something."

"Venture it, then."

Whalen looked at his assistant through half-closed eyes and studied his face with all the frankness that he brought to studying his own character. He knew the type, and confessed it (to himself) openly. It was the face of an exceedingly clever criminal — a man nevertheless who might never do anything remarkable of his own volition, but who might be made to do anything at all. But what he said had little to do with his thoughts.

"You possess sentiment, Stannard, and a vivid imagination. I will appeal to both. I will prophesy! The party now in power think they may save their bacon by starting a national issue that will divert the avalanche that within a year may pour down upon them. They will hasten their own destruction. There will not be a smell of bacon left after this frying. Monihan, Brady, and several others are getting nervous, for mighty good reasons, so they encourage the

Fenians to think they will free Ireland. Ireland will be just the same, only settled. Our great, expected civil war didn't come off. France, Germany, and Russia will welcome anything that they think will cripple the Anglo-Saxon power, but especially that of England and her colonies. They will be astonished. After all this passing madness there won't be so many innocent fools alive, nor so many knaves in power in the world. We will see lots of interesting things, Stannard. We will see how Bloch's ideas on the 'Future of War' hold out in active practice. We will see if the lessons of the war between Russia and Japan have been learned by heart. There will be tested a number of inventions. But we have no startlingly new methods to begin with. There is no such thing as a practical flying-machine, despite predictions and promises. Our submarines are no better than they were a score of years ago, and they are an unknown quantity in actual warfare. The torpedo has proved its sinister usefulness, but the new detectors have done away with night surprises, and no torpedo-boat nor destroyer could live on the surface of the water under accurate and concentrated fire. It will be hugely interesting, and we will pay our debts and be rich, you and I, Stannard, before the whole thing is over, and then I think I will get out the most remarkable edition ever issued."

The editor paused, Stannard gazed at him wonderingly.

"What will there be in it?" he asked.

"Out of the war may come better things; we may be patriots after all, we may get some salve for our journalistic consciences. If this happens, I may publish an issue that will be devoted to telling them 'How we did it!'"

"We would look well in that case," Stannard suggested with a touch of sarcasm.

"We would be a little out of the ordinary," assented the editor. "Buhler and Bodkin may be coming to a certain little meeting this afternoon; there will be another high-handed seizure of American fishing-vessels next Friday or Saturday. That is all arranged for. I have written a regular British blusterer for our little Manchester paper; by the bye, she is attracting quite a little notice — that was a good investment — may soon pay expenses; I was afraid Spragge would overdo it at first. But the dear old *Times* has treated him seriously, and that is what we wanted. They had an article describing *The Watchman* as a 'prejudiced, anti-American publication.' He seems to be stirring them up over there."

Stannard looked at his watch. "Yes, I told you Spragge was a good one; but I must be off to my desk," he said quickly. "I have an idea that will fetch them."

"Dip your pen in red ink," said the editor. "Stir them up — the administration is with you."

When Stannard had gone, the editor sat there, looking out of the window. He could just see the flag flying on the flagstaff of the old City Hall, now a museum and historical art gallery; as he watched its folds opening and spreading to the crisp winter wind, the corners of his mouth moved as if he had just remembered the joke.

CHAPTER III

AT THE CLUB ON THE AVENUE

In a wide window of a big white clubhouse on Fifth Avenue sat a group of men talking in low voices. Outside it was snowing heavily and blowing half a gale; the air was filled with swirling clouds of icy flakes into which the upper stories of the tall buildings disappeared like mountain tops. The streets and sidewalks were deserted. All at once an electric bus appeared, pushing its noiseless way up the avenue. One of the group pointed it out to the others.

"Look at that," said he, "I remember when they first introduced electricity in the buses they could scarcely climb the hill by the Waldorf on a slippery day. Jove! See that one go ahead through the drifts!"

"Well," replied some one, "they've got twice as much power as they used to have."

"Three times as much," assented the first speaker, "and in half the compass; that storage battery of Westland's solved the problem of electric transportation for heavy vehicles. I re-

member when you could get stock in the first company for next to nothing."

"It isn't worth so very much now," put in a third member of the little gathering, "last dividend passed — selling at fifty — let's see — four years ago — "

"Oh, don't let us talk stocks or dividends or business," objected a middle-aged man seated beside the one who had first spoken; "if things keep on the way they're going, I'll have to apply for a job driving one of those things, before long."

"Four dollars and a half for six hours, that's not bad," some one remarked; "but they wouldn't let you work, Thornton; you're a bloated bondholder, you know; you couldn't get into the Union."

Marbury Thornton tossed back his head and smiled.

"I suppose you're right," he agreed. "But I might get in if I 'put up' for it. Hullo! There's the Admiral!" Turning, he signalled to a short, smooth-shaven, gray-haired man who had just entered the room. "Come over here, Admiral," he cried, "come over and join us."

The short man gave a wave of recognition and walked briskly toward the window.

"Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!" he cried, giving energetic little bows to left and right. "Discussing the weather and the prospects?"

"We were discussing the prospects and the weather together, Admiral; neither looks very cheerful, Heaven help us!" another member of the group replied, making room for the short man to join the circle.

"Oh, don't be glum about it," laughed the newcomer, heartily, as he seated himself. "There's one side of the old ship left."

"And there's an election next November, thank God!" exclaimed the man nearest the window. He struck the arm of the chair a blow that gave an added force to the depth of his feelings. "The country's learned a bitter lesson and will prove it at the polls, and now with this talk of investigation into certain departments, and the frauds and embezzlements and so forth, there will be a rattling in the political alleys, I can tell you, and all the pins down. I have little faith in their congress —they would stampede like a flock of sheep. But their time is short."

"They've just about begun to realize that truth," observed a large, keen-eyed man, with a close-trimmed white beard. "I don't know but that we'll see an effort made to stem the tide; one way or another they'll give the screw another turn and get what juice there's left; seems to me they've about got it all, though, eh? There are too many suddenly rich men at Washington to suit my taste."

There was a pause for a moment. The wind had begun to blow harder, and some one pointed out a figure in a long blue coat, struggling across the street from the opposite corner.

"It's the General!" exclaimed the man with the gray beard, eagerly. "We'll all be here, every man Jack of us that was at Tucker's dinner. Let's see, how long ago was that?"

"Five years ago last Thursday," some one answered. "Poor Tucker! I remember his bemoaning the fact that we had had too long an era of prosperity, and prophesying disaster. Where is he now?"

"Living with a son-in-law of his, a revenue collector, somewhere in New Jersey. Awful crash, wasn't it? The trouble with the matter was he tried to keep the business alive too long. He should have shut up shop when he saw how things were going — taken his yacht and gone to Europe, the way Peter Knowlton did; but Tucker was always what they call 'public-spirited.'"

"You're quite right, Governor," observed the gray-bearded one. "Quite right! But the expression 'public-spirited' has another definition nowadays. Ah, there's Goddard!"

A tall man strode in from the wide marble corridor. He looked about the lounging room, then seeing the others he came over to them, pushing up an easy chair, and including them

all in a smile of recognition and greeting. He made the seventh member of the party. It was easy to see that all were on long familiar terms.

Nearest to the window sat Thornton, and next to him Rice; the first a banker, and the second a broker and capitalist, who for the last six years had been the senior member of one of the most prominent firms in Wall Street, a keen, far-sighted man of affairs.

The one addressed as "Governor" had been at the head of the State at Albany some eight years before, hence his title. He was probably as renowned as a lawyer as he had been as a straightforward politician.

The little gray man, the "Admiral," had been on the retired list now for some five years or more, but he looked much younger than he really was; his bright eye and quick method of speech, together with his cheery voice, marked him as enjoying everything that good health and good spirits could bring to any man at the age of sixty-eight.

Beside him, filling the big chair in which he sat, was a very heavy person of large frame and ponderous manner. Edward Norton was perhaps better known than any of the rest. His writings upon questions of history and economics had attracted the attention of thinking people the world over. As the editor and owner of a conservative

newspaper, he was still a force in his own way, and it was rumoured and believed that, before the present administration had come into power, he had been offered almost anything in the gift of the last Republican administration, but he had preferred to keep out of public life entirely.

The oldest of them all, and one who had as yet taken small part in the conversation, listening attentively with his elbows on the arms of his chair and his finger-tips together, was celebrated also the country through. Although retired now from any active part in public or in business affairs, he had occupied in his time a large share of both. He had been the leader of the bar of his State, so far as reputation went, for many years, and had been an ambassador, well liked and honoured, at the Court of St. James.

As the last comer drew up and seated himself, the old man turned.

"General," he observed, "we admired the way you handled the forces at your command in crossing the avenue. I suppose that manœuvre at the corner might be called forming yourself in echelon, but I noticed you had to do your own skirmishing."

The one addressed as "General" laughed. "The only casualty was my hat, Mr. Taintor," he said; "I have just established a dressing station in the cloak room, where it is receiving first

aid to the injured. The wind came up very suddenly. Is there any news this evening?"

"Not much," replied the editor; "but I anticipate there will be important news in the next day or so."

"You mean from the Northwest?" asked the Governor, seeing that Mr. Norton paused.

"Yes, from the Northwest; but I should think that they might be able to escape any serious consequence, although I hold that our action has been very ill-advised, especially this talk of sending troops."

"Were there any comments from London on the subject?" asked Mr. Rice. "Confess I did not read the morning paper very thoroughly. Too much of a task for a holiday."

"There is a column despatch in *The Tribune*," observed Mr. Norton, slowly. "Not exactly official, but it proves the matter has excited a deal of talk. A Manchester paper — a British jingo sheet — seems to have lost its head completely. I can't blame them for having a little feeling upon the subject. I would if I were on their side of it, for, frankly, I think we are wrong. My son-in-law, Crayl-Hamilton, who is a member of Parliament, writes me that Ambassador Dalton's conduct is stirring up much bad blood — there is very bitter feeling growing. We are entirely in the wrong."

"We generally are, nowadays," observed the ex-Ambassador. "Who was it who remarked, at some period in our past history, as a toast, 'My country, may she always be right; but, right or wrong, my country!' Wasn't that it?"

"Something of that sort was credited to the great Daniel," returned the editor. "But it seems to me that there is really no difficulty in the question, if we would come down to facts; it is capable of a most amicable and equitable adjustment. The Alaskan boundary line has always been well defined. Surely the matter was settled in 1903. I can discover no evidence of England's desire to encroach upon it. Just look at the ending of the war in the Orient. After sinking ships, and killing men, and incurring debts beyond recovery, Russia and Japan had to submit the decision to the tribunal and abide by it. These are the plain facts for all to read. But the great American public doesn't want facts, apparently. You have been up to Alaska, have you not, General?"

"Yes, twice; once as a young officer in 1896, — no, '97, just before the Spanish War, — and another time in 1905. The way those Northwestern towns had grown in that short space of time was marvellous. But nothing to what it is now, I suppose. Dawson City must have eighty thousand inhabitants."

"Three-fourths of whom are Americans, I dare-say, eh?" asked the Admiral.

"Yes, if you wish to call them so — er — many 'hyphenated Americans.' But the trouble is with the peculiar conditions. During the winter time the place is full of idle men, and miners, as a rule, are not the most tractable."

"Who is this Siever who seems to be so prominent?" asked the banker. "I have read of him as — er — presiding at this alleged mass meeting. The yellow press seems bent on making a hero out of him."

"He's one of our hyphenated brethren," responded the General. "Must be a comparatively new comer, a German-American, I am told; never heard of him when I was in the country. His action in demanding the release of those prisoners taken by the Northwestern police seems to be a bit high-handed."

"It wasn't his action in demanding the release; it was in leading the party that released them," put in the Governor. "To my mind the affray at the little mining place, Jugtown, or whatever it was, was entirely of the American miners' own making — a clear case of jumping somebody's claim and relying on force to hold it. Not to be too inquisitive, but General Goddard probably could tell us if there is any truth in the rumour about troops being sent to the 'White Pass.'"

Now the General was yet on the active list and was in command of the Department of the East. All eyes turned toward him to see how he would take the last frank question.

"I have heard it said," he responded quietly, "that some influence is being brought to bear upon the President that may cause him to take action. I don't doubt in the least that a couple of regiments may be sent; but I do not think for an instant that they will be ordered to cross the line. I hear, by the way," he added, as if changing the subject, but showing that it remained in his mind, "that the navy is to have a launching within the next two or three months, eh, Admiral?"

Admiral Howarth shrugged his shoulders. "I know little more than you do," he replied. "I'm nothing but an old fogy, out of date, dismantled, and laid up for good; but I understand that there will be four launchings some time before the spring. Great heavens! the vessels were nearly completed two years ago, and their armaments ready for them. My son has been ordered to the *Arizona*, his first command — a fine ship. He writes me that the work in the navy-yards has been ordered to be taken up again; and thanks to some one in Washington, we prevented those two cruisers being sold to Germany."

"A strange thing," put in the Governor, "I

heard in relation to that was that the Vice-President really stirred himself, came on from Montana, where he had been for a month or two, and interested himself personally in the matter. As a general rule, he has not had much to do with that lot down in Washington, and doesn't interfere with any of their affairs. He's a strange person; perhaps some one here has met him."

"I have," rejoined Thornton, "met him two or three times; he's an odd mixture of a great many kinds of—"

"Bad medicine," interjected Rice.

"He's not exactly that, but he is erratic; you can never tell what's going to be on top."

"I have known him also," spoke up the Governor. "It's my firm belief that he's rather sick of his present company, and that is the reason that he's attended so strictly to his private business."

"Which is," put in Mr. Norton, speaking with emphasis, "resolving himself into a nonentity. He cut no figure in the campaign, and has not appeared prominently since. I don't think that he possesses any longer what you might call 'progressive combativeness.' He is too lazy."

"Don't be so sure of that," Thornton replied. "I was in the Montana Consolidated."

"Then you should be a good judge," laughed the Admiral, his eyes twinkling. "He licked you fellows out of your boots that time, didn't he?"

"That's what he did," the banker replied. "Will you press that bell, Admiral?"

"We'll drink the season's greeting, sir," smiled the old sailor. "Bless my soul, we've been so engrossed in gabbling that we have forgotten what day it is."

"That's true," cried Mr. Rice. "By gad, I told my wife this morning that the old furs would have to do another year. My present to her was a batch of receipted bills from the butcher, baker, and candlestick maker, and lucky at that to have them. There hasn't been much of a run on luxuries lately in our family."

Rice paused, and the banker took up the idea quietly. "Nor in many families, except in some quarters," he said. "I see that Secretary Monihan has returned from his Southern trip in the President's yacht." Mr. Thornton spoke with the merest suggestion of bitterness.

"Yes, most of the yachting has been done from Washington the past year or so," remarked the ex-Ambassador. "They are getting to be a lot of sad sea-dogs, or glad sea-dogs," he added, chuckling. "Now, if the President could only be tempted to take his Cabinet on a voyage around the world, it would be an interesting experience; they could touch at the Philippine Islands and see how our ex-fellow-citizens are cutting one another's throats, and they would look a long

time before they saw an American flag. Just think what has become of our merchant marine in the last two years! If it had not been for the British Combination —" he checked himself. "But I made up my mind I wouldn't be serious to-day; I am trying to get myself in a humorous frame of mind in order to dine with my grandchildren."

It was a strange thing that during the whole of the afternoon there had been an attempt on everybody's part to avoid growing serious; yet there had been present a feeling of depression throughout the whole trend of the conversation. It was a tone of protest and complaint, half expressed, against a hopeless situation, besides an omnipresent, pervading sense of uncertainty, in fact, as to the immediate future; but each understood the other's mental attitude so well that there was little necessity for its expression in words.

Again the subject was suddenly turned.

"By the way, who's heard from *him* lately?" asked the General, nodding up in the direction of a portrait of a very strong-faced, full-chested man who gazed fearlessly out of deep-set eyes behind black-rimmed eye-glasses. "He was to have been back next month sometime, I believe. Too bad he ever came to the conclusion that two terms at Washington were enough."

"Well, it was a reasonable view he took of the

situation," said Mr. Norton. "I saw him just before he sailed for China; but I hear he has gone up into that wonderful new table-land country, shooting."

"I should think it was about time he gave up a good deal of that sort of thing," chimed in the ex-Ambassador. "I wish he was back in the country now, for we are working along toward a nice large mess."

Governor Landale blew a careful smoke ring, and then blew another through the centre of it, a clever little trick of his that he would never perform if requested. It generally portrayed the fact that he was thinking deeply.

"I don't believe that you could get him to mix himself up in it at all. He has an idea that the people will work out their own salvation. I don't think that he has even heard of this late threatening talk, or he would have cabled some one of his intentions."

For a few minutes no one spoke. The Governor blew another smoke ring, and the Ambassador compared his watch with the great clock in the corner.

"The storm has somewhat abated," observed the Admiral, interrupting the pause suddenly, "the wind seems to be working round, and I think it will clear up during the night. So much from a nautical weather prophet!"

Mr. Taintor, who had risen, looked out of the window. "Then I'll save cab fare," he remarked; "I'm indulging economics in small matters myself. I actually thought of buying a pair of snowshoes, only it would be a good deal like buying a set of musical glasses — I don't think I could get anything out of them without some practice."

Out on the street just then there sounded hoarse, brazen voices, and the well-known shouts of "Extra! Extra! *Evening Voice!*" Through the snow came three or four men, sheltering bundles of papers beneath their coats. Shouting their chorus, they disappeared up the avenue.

"The 'Voice of the people is heard in the land,'" said Mr. Norton. "More lies and inventions. I wish that I could think our national appetite was cloyed — but no such good fortune. It seems yet to be the popular seasoning. The sensational press has had a bad effect upon our national character."

"Thank Heaven, we don't have to touch it unless we want to," spoke up the Governor. "Gentlemen, here are our refreshments. The season's greetings."

The party rose and drank the usual toast to the "Merry Christmas and the Happy New Year" in silence. The Governor, putting down his glass with a sigh, walked out into the corridor. As the rest followed a few minutes later, they met him returning.

"Just been to the ticker," he said, "to see if there is anything going on, and there is a bit of news. It seems that there was some trouble at Panama yesterday; a British war vessel, they say, forced its way into the locks ahead of an American Pacific freighter, and did some damage. I don't know what it amounts to, but *The Voice* has got out an extra, they told me at the office; one of the clerks has a copy."

"I thought it was not allowed in the club, for fear of contaminating the older members," suggested the ex-Ambassador.

"Well, we don't keep it on file," answered Governor Landale, who always attempted to reply to the old gentleman's pleasantry, "perhaps we are immune."

"Then if we are," suggested the General, "let's go in and have a look."

There were a few members already in the office, bending over a great sheet of news matter that lay stretched out on the desk; across the top, in flaring head-lines, was the following: —

"HIGH-HANDED PROCEEDINGS OF A BRITISH WAR VESSEL!"

There followed an account — written as if the writer had been outraged in his deepest sensibilities — detailing how H.M.S. *Cumberland* had defied the rights of an American vessel, crushed

her way ahead of her into the lock, damaging her stern and incidentally sweeping the American flag into the water, doing some little damage to the lock itself, and disobeying the orders of the port guardian, who had told the *Cumberland* to wait her turn. It was hinted that had an American war vessel been on the spot, the *Cumberland* would not have dared to have disobeyed. Her captain (according to the account) claimed that he had been delayed purposely, and that his request for lock rights had been set aside. The battleship was now occupying the lock, and the port master and the national supervisor were awaiting instructions from Washington. Farther below it was stated that the British Northwestern police had recaptured one of the prisoners released by the mob at the post on the Yukon the week before, and it was intimated that troops had been ordered from California and Washington to get in readiness to embark for Alaska. This article was headed, "An Outrage on the Flag."

Mr. Norton, as he finished reading, took the Governor aside. "It is plain to me," he said, speaking gravely, "that somehow, or in some way, a national issue is being forced to the front by the Government — a threadbare refuge. Something had to be done, or there would be bread riots before spring."

"I've feared it for some time," replied the

Governor. "However, I never thought we would be brought face to face with an international crisis. I doubt it now."

"We may soon have one to deal with," was Mr. Norton's slow reply. "But the fact will be that the issue will apparently be forced upon the Government by the people. '*Vox populi potens est.*' A very bad feeling has been engendered by this constant misrepresentation."

A telegram had just been handed the General. His face grew grave as he read it, but he said nothing and beckoned the Admiral aside. The latter's face grew grave also as he listened.

"No, no," he protested excitedly, in a half-whisper, "they still have some common sense among them; they would not do that. Besides," he added bitterly, "we're not prepared, we're not prepared!"

CHAPTER IV

AT THE CAPITOL

It was Sunday, the 2d of January. There was great excitement at the Capitol. At all the places where senators, congressmen, and politicians met there were excited groups talking and hand-shaking. Newspaper men and correspondents hovered about the edges; a special session of Congress had been summoned, breaking up the usual holiday. A stormy night's debate had ended in nothing but stormy talk. On Monday something might be done — but much might happen between then and Monday.

A meeting of the Cabinet was to be held at the White House at ten o'clock. It was nine — wild rumours are flying. One had it that the British ambassador had packed up his belongings and had booked his passage on the next Cunarder that was to sail from New York. Would there be war? Who knew? Reporters hung about the door-steps of the members of the Cabinet, and a small army waited in the corridor of the White House.

In the big East Room, the President paced the floor alone. He had denied himself to every-

body, his orders had been most emphatic — no one was to intrude on him — as he reached the window he stopped. Secretary Monihan's carriage was entering through the gates. The President fairly ran to the door of the room and spoke to the attendant who was seated in the big chair outside.

"Tell Secretary Monihan that I will see him in a few minutes," he said; "at present I am not to be disturbed."

With that he took up again his heavy measured steps. With his arms folded behind him and his head bowed, he turned back and forth, now and then pausing as if he had brought up against an invisible barrier; then stepping out, as if he had determined to break through it. For two nights the President had not slept, his face was lined and furrowed, his eyes were red and tired; all the old-time look of courage had deserted him. On many occasions in the past he had counselled or ordered strikes that he knew would mean hunger and hardship, loss of life and lawbreaking. He had done so, sure of himself, sure of his understanding, and sure of the backing behind him. Forcefully, yes, mercilessly, he had given orders to his lieutenants. Certain of his capacity to handle the situation, he had never looked behind him. There had been strength for the struggle and power in the winning. Now, how-

ever, it was different. He realized something had gone wrong. The deciding power was not with him, that was true; but the responsibility would be, and he had had responsibility enough. It weighed him down. Instead of the happy days for the classes he represented, he saw unhappiness; instead of Utopia, it was chaos. There had been something wrong with his reasoning, something twisted in his ideas. He had reached that unhappy state of men who, believing in their best intentions, judging blindly their capacities, find suddenly confronting them the barrier of their self-acknowledged limitations.

The evening before he had been closeted with Mr. Monihan for hours, and he had so clearly seen that gentleman in all his uselessness that his spirits had been shattered from the very lack of hope. Once, one of the bitter opponents of the administration had called his collection of advisers "the half-educated Cabinet." Now he saw it so. There was not a strong man in it. The President wondered if there could be anything, after all, in the effect of inherited knowledge. Despite his omnivorous reading and his retentive memory, he knew in his secret heart that he was an uneducated man. The style of his speech and writing in his early days had been redeemed from the cheap and catchy only by his honesty of expression. The criticism of his recent official litera-

ture, his messages and correspondence, he knew to be just, and there was one other thing: since the first year of his coming to the White House, he had been growing shy — a shyness he had endeavoured to hide under an assumption of brusquerie. But the covert smiles of a class of people he had thought he had honestly despised, cut him cruelly. It was worse than their open hostility. As to the foreigners, ambassadors, ministers, and so on, he knew that they laughed at him and his well-meaning wife, and he was not big enough to override the bitterness of his knowledge. More serious than all, open accusations had been made against the characters of many of his appointees. To tell the truth, the President was self-deposed from his pedestal as a popular champion; he had helped to *make* history, but he did not know what history would *say*. And now he feared — for that was the reason he wished to be alone — he feared.

The door of the East Room opened quickly, and without ceremony Secretary Monihan entered. His heavy red cheeks, his big sensual mouth, and his small, keenly clever eyes made his face one to be remembered; it was certainly not impressive, but his magnificent head of iron-gray hair redeemed it in a measure from its stamp of vulgarity. Monihan was very proud of his hair, it was part of his stock in trade; any reporter who

called him "leonine" was sure of a big black cigar. He was the pet of the press, for he had the cheap politician's tactful gift of assumed good fellowship. This morning Mr. Monihan's breath smelt of last night's whiskey mingled with the perfume of this morning's barber shop.

"Well, Mr. President," he cried, bringing his hands together with a great slap, "well, sir, I'm ahead of time a minute or two; man at the door tried to stop me — knew it was a mistake. This will be an important day! I thought you might, perhaps, have something to say to me before the meeting. Just consider them demands of Lord Northcroft's in view of the situation and the temper of the people."

"I have nothing to say to you alone that I will not say to any other member of my Cabinet," the President replied slowly.

"But surely you must realize, sir — "

"I realize the whole situation. I have sent for the Vice-President. I hope, despite his illness, that he will come, and be here on time. His special should arrive this morning."

"My dear Mr. President," began the Secretary of State, "Mr. Crantz is hardly necessary, he is at best a visionary and at heart an aristocrat. But praise God you are in health and strength. And may you continue to lead us, sir, in peace or war, to victory. To — "

The President lifted his hand. "The others are coming, I must go and meet them," he said, cutting Monihan's speech short ere he had fairly started. With that he opened the door and ushered the secretary out into the hall.

The members of his Cabinet were gathering in the Council Chamber. As Mr. Monihan followed at the President's heels, his face was redder than before, but he bowed smilingly to the knot of reporters and then waved them back as they would have stepped forward and surrounded him. Mr. Crawford, the private secretary, was at the door of the Blue Room, and to him Mr. Monihan addressed a question.

"Has Mr. Crantz arrived?" he asked.

"No, sir, the special is delayed. But he is hastening as quickly as possible — the last despatch from Harpers Ferry, sir."

The news did not appear to be pleasing to Mr. Monihan; he frowned slightly, and then catching sight of the Secretary of War his frown changed to a smile as he stretched forth his hand.

"How are you, Governor?" — he spoke in a half-whisper, — "I would like to have a word with you." It was difficult for Mr. Monihan to avoid falling into the corner-whispering habit of his early political days, he still buttonholed people with the old manner of important mystery. "I rely on your help; there is some convincing to be

done, and we must stand together. The country has its eyes upon us."

The secretary replied with a non-committal pressure of the fingers and bowed slightly. Another minute the President was calling to order the most important Cabinet meeting of the administration.

Just as the door closed there was a hurried entrance into the outside corridor, and Brady, the lobbyist, came, pushing his way through the crowd of reporters, asking loudly for Mr. Monihan.

When the door-man informed him that the secretary had just gone into the meeting, Mr. Brady appeared much disturbed; he struck his fist into the palm of his hand with a muttered oath of vexation. He hesitated and then slowly turned to go. But immediately the newspaper men crowded about him, nudging and elbowing one another in their anxiety to get closer. All were speaking at once, in eager voices. Mr. Brady backed into a corner, with both hands uplifted in protest.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," he exclaimed. "Be aisy now—"

"For heaven's sake give the oracle a chance," murmured a little man on the outskirts of the crowd. "Give him a chance; he'll talk."

Just here the door-man interposed. "Hold your clack, all of ye, or out ye go," he cried, in the

tone and manner of a municipal court officer, and in the broadest of brogues. "Hold your clack."

A semblance of order followed, the reporter of *The Voice* and *Verdict*, who stood immediately in front of Mr. Brady, pencil and note-book in hand, managed to ask a question. "You have some news for us, Mr. Brady?" he asked, writing as he spoke. "What is your opinion of the situation?"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," again protested the lobbyist. "Why should ye ask me — but there is some excitement for you, perhaps a bit of news. The British ambassador was on his way to the White House, a moment since, when some small boys on the corner, who allowed their feelings to get the better of them, shied a few snowballs. The coachman's hat was knocked off, the horses ran away, and there was the devil to pay generally. One of the snowballs caught his Lordship in the eye."

"I'll bet it was an Irishman that threw it," said one of the reporters to his neighbour as he scribbled away in his note-book. The seriousness of the occasion and the possible consequence of the insult were lost entirely in the desire for news.

"Well, sir," went on the representative of the syndicate, "and then what happened?"

"The horses were stopped by a policeman and the ambassador returned to his house," con-

tinued Mr. Brady. "There was a big crowd in front when I came by, singing the 'Star-Spangled Banner'; the police were endeavouring to disperse them."

"There's a column in this," cried one of the reporters, jamming on his hat and making for the door.

"*A la lanterne!*" cried another, laughing; "this will be a busy day for us fellows."

"Something doing, you bet," echoed a third, "and more doing to-morrow," with that the party dashed out of the door into the open air.

Standing in groups on the sidewalks, from which the melting snow had just been brushed, were congressmen and senators, and each group had its spokesman. There was no unity of sentiment, no great bond of soul-sweeping feeling or purpose. They all appeared encompassed in a fog of mysterious anxiety and subdued excitement.

Many faces were grave and troubled. Others appeared eager and nervously expectant. Outside the big iron gates in the streets there waited a huge crowd. It appeared neither serious nor angry, merely idle and curious. On the outskirts small boys were snowballing one another, and a drunken man waving an American flag had a knot of encouraging listeners. As the guard at the gate allowed the reporters to pass through, they were assailed by questions on all sides. But

disdaining to answer, they started hot foot for the news offices and telegraph stations. Soon the wireless systems would be vibrating. But now advancing up the street were a half score of men and boys shouting "Extra! Extra!" in hoarse voices. Many of the crowd broke forward to meet them. They had but one paper to sell, the "Capital edition" of *The New York Evening Voice!*

Across the top of the page was a huge spread eagle, and beneath it, in letters eight inches long in vivid red, was the one word "War." In a small parenthesis about a quarter of an inch high was a question mark; but it seemed to be lost in the apparent statement, which read as follows: "The Cabinet is in session and it is rumoured that WAR WILL BE DECLARED — when Congress meets on *Monday;*" and still below it were two paragraphs, headed respectively, "SHALL WE SUBMIT TO IT?" and "BRITISH INVASION." Under the first was an account of the seizure of two more fishing schooners off the coast of Newfoundland, and under the second the statement that British troops were patrolling American mining property on the Yukon. On the inside sheet, under a picture representing "John Bull" and "Uncle Sam," each leaning on the breech of a huge cannon, lanyard in hand, glaring angrily at each other, was the line: "WHO FIRST?" and still beneath was

spread across the page: "THE SAILING OF THE BRITISH FLEET," and smaller again, "It is reported on good authority that the war department has been informed of the *Sailing of the British fleet from Bermuda.* The probable destination is *Panama!*"

That was all. But the people as they bought the papers broke into smaller groups; they seemed to disdain everything but the startling head-lines. The drunken man burst into a wild "Hurroo," followed by a torrent of profanity. "Damn the bloody British!" he cried. No one stopped him. "Three cheers for Ireland!" Some bystanders laughed.

Two well-dressed young men, coming down the street, crossed over to avoid the crowd. A ragged man with a handful of the red extras followed them. "War! War!" he croaked, extending his arm and almost laying hold of them. They pushed him aside and hurried on.

"My furlough was recalled last night," spoke one of the young men, looking back over his shoulder. "Can you really believe that — that this is — " he broke off suddenly and incoherently — "my God! I wish it was with — with any other country." He turned, looked back again at the crowd. "Our countrymen. Pah! War!" He choked back his indignation and laughed bitterly. "When do you join your ship, Emery?" he asked, when he had controlled himself.

"Tuesday," replied the other, thoughtfully. "When do you join your regiment?"

"My orders came this morning, I have been appointed to the staff. Just think, we were going on to Montreal to-morrow, think of it. I was to be married there next week to Miss Carntyne. You were to be my best man. Her father's just been made colonel, Royal Canadian Artillery. You would have liked him — the finest old chap; — now — " the young man paused at a corner. "Well, here we part — hell of a profession ours, isn't it?"

The two young men shook hands. Then the taller grasped the one who had last spoken by the shoulder and what he said showed that he felt a depth of feeling back of the mere words. "Cheer up," he smiled, "perhaps it may blow over and all come out O K. It's awful hard, I know, and I don't like to fight in a war where my feelings are not enlisted, any more than you do. It is a devilish bad business; but cheer up, it may blow over. Congress may listen to reason, if that pack of hyenas who have been doing all the howling can be controlled, there are scores of sensible men there yet. Whom do you suppose I'm going to meet to-night? My dear old uncle. He's heading a sort of peace delegation from New York, and is going to have an interview with the President and with Lord North-

croft to-day. They used to be great pals on the other side when the old gentleman was ambassador. So cheer up, old man — good-by, Emery, good-by."

"Good-by, Taintor."

They parted, the young lieutenant going over to the navy department, and the young captain of artillery boarding a Pennsylvania Avenue car. In his pockets he had a note from General Goddard, appointing him an aide to the latter's staff — a coveted position that from experience he knew he was capable of filling to his own and to the department's satisfaction, yet he would much rather have preferred active service.

But to return to the meeting at the White House. What took place only those know who have had access to the minutes of the meeting — if any were kept. But it was told that the president listened unmoved to Monihan's fiery speech, for the secretary had entirely thrown off the mask of caution. He urged, he pleaded, and at last he demanded war. For national honour, for commercial reasons, for justice, and at last for *party policy!* And it was here that the President had stopped it. The President demanded time; the British ambassador had yet to be heard from. No news, as yet, of the affair in the street had reached the White House.

During the progress of the meeting a side door

had opened, and a man had entered quietly and unannounced. It was while Mr. Monihan was speaking, and it was only when the latter had seated himself at the President's interruption, and practically at his order, that he had noticed that Mr. Crantz had just arrived. The President observed him at this moment also, and, rising, crossed quickly to him and quietly took his hand.

"I need you," he said; "come and sit beside me."

There was a movement of the chairs down the side of the big table as Mr. Crantz took his seat. There was but an exchange of nods of recognition, for the most part; but Mr. Monihan had risen hastily, and leaning over the Vice-President had struck him familiarly on the shoulder.

"You're just in time," he whispered. "This is a momentous day."

Mr. Crantz looked up at him and smiled. The Vice-President was a man of but little over forty, with a clear-cut, strongly marked face and keen, very light blue eyes. His firm lips were drawn to a straight line beneath his close-trimmed mustache. He was broad-shouldered and heavy; but his movements were quick and nervous; despite the pallor of recent illness, he looked a strong, self-reliant man.

"Indeed?" was all he remarked to Monihan's rather remarkable greeting. The President's man-

ner had changed. His apparent flash of anger, shown when he had interrupted the Secretary of State, was now succeeded by a low-voiced calmness.

"Gentlemen," he said quietly, "the meeting is adjourned. Mr. Crantz, I would like to speak with you."

Every one arose, and the President and the Vice-President went through the door into the inner office. Once there, the head of the nation turned. "Mr. Crantz," said he, "you must help me, I need advice. There are many things I do not understand. I have asked Lord Northcroft to come and see me; he should be here by now, we will meet him alone."

There was a knock upon the door. Mr. Crawford, the private secretary, came in hastily. A message had come from Lord Northcroft. After what had happened, the ambassador did not think it wise to venture forth. The President, at Mr. Crantz's suggestion, ordered his carriage at once. He and his new-found adviser ten minutes later had started for the British Embassy.

That night there were marchings and mass meetings in nearly every large city in the Union. Resolutions were adopted, requesting Congress to act at once. In the West a few municipal boards met and solemnly passed motions of the same character. Time-serving mayors and popular

governors rushed into print with utterances of fervid patriotism.

Attention was called to the expressions of loyalists in Canada and to the movement of Canadian troops. It was true that, influenced by the American press, its threats and urgings, the Canadians who had not forgotten the decision of 1903 were angry and frightened. But there was little immediate reason: there was a large fleet at Halifax and two heavy squadrons at Bermuda and Bahama waters; three fast battle ships were at Jamaica and four at Trinidad. All this was pointed out. "Save the Canal!" cried *The Voice* and *The Verdict.*

All Monday Congress remained in session, and the British ambassador still stayed. In direct communication with his home government he counselled, "Wait!" But the forces that threatened peace were gathering. Extras appeared with great head-lines every half-hour of the day. Deliberate, misleading lies were printed now without the parenthetically suggested question mark. In New York, Chicago, and Denver business was entirely suspended, and men hoped and feared, and trembled and rejoiced. On Monday night the crowds gathered again in the big cities and the smaller towns. A most startling rumour was afloat, and it grew and grew until it was regarded as a certainty.

A big transatlantic American liner, the *Lowell* had arrived in Boston with a curious tale: In a dense fog off the Banks she had heard the sound of heavy firing, and changing her course had steered toward it, signalling by wireless her name. A confused message had been received a few minutes before the firing began out of which she could make but a few letters. A combination of them spelled nothing but made " N-br-sk-." Now the U.S.S. *Nebraska* had been at Mount Desert on Sunday and had started to the South eastward, and it was known that H.M.S. *Cornwallis* had left Halifax the day before to join the English squadron at Nassau. Guesswork supplied the rest, yet there was some reason for looking for the worst. The lookout, the officer on the bridge, and some of the passengers of the *Lowell* had claimed that, as they were heading toward the sound of the firing and when they were at least ten miles away, a heavy shot had plunged into the sea but a short distance off the steamer's bow, after which she had changed her course and put full speed for the coast.

The news set the country aflame! Magnified and distorted, it reached England and touched the train that was leading toward the mine.

CHAPTER V

IN ENGLAND

TRAFALGAR SQUARE was crowded, so thronged in fact that people who well remembered great gatherings in the past confessed that former mobs had been as nothing. In the numbers and the force of the demonstration, Mafeking night was forgotten. But it was no holiday crowd. There were no penny whistles, no jesters' bladders, no taunting peacocks' feathers, no happy impudent slatterns, no arm-in-arm marching, and never a sound of song or music. Instead there hummed an ominous, constant, deep-toned murmur. Now and then a ragged, vicious shout arose from the edges, or a half-savage cheer from the centre where the mass surged and swayed about the Landseer lions, there bareheaded speakers, fiercely gesticulating, addressed those nearest them. Buses and cabs, caught and immovable in the throng, were like ships aground, with the sweep of a sea of faces all about them, from their roofs and seats other speakers were shouting wildly. Here and there a bit of colour showed where some one waved a Union jack.

The East End had flowed into the city, and from the city had merged into the great gathering places; the East End had slipped its leash, and its fangs were dripping — it needed but a direction to run amuck.

Parliament was in session, and about the Embankment and the Bridge and the Abbey surged another crowd. Traffic was stopped entirely. The side streets were so jammed with vehicles of all kinds that the police found it impossible to extricate the tangle. Horses that had been without food or water for hours were detached from their harness and led home along the pavements. For twenty-four hours the regiments had been under arms, and the policemen had had no rest. And for the first time, despite the strictness of the municipal ordinances, the grog-shops of the lower class had kept open doors; daylight had found the lights still burning; men cursing and yelling swayed about the entrances. No such ebullition of popular feeling had ever before been known in London. On many occasions there had been disorderly rejoicings, even as far back as the time of Waterloo. But then laughter rang, merriment or rejoicing ruled. Now it was sullen anger, or shrieking, raging madness.

Telegrams from other cities and towns announced the fact that similar gatherings were in control. Only at the great military camps and

depots, like Aldershot, was there a semblance of order. But the rumour was that even the soldiers were at one with the temper of the populace. England was in an imperious, demanding mood. The utterance of cooler tongues, the thoughts of calmer minds, went for nothing. The man who counseled "wait," was threatened; he who suggested peace, reviled. There was no reasoning with the universal feeling, no dealing with the condition of the public mind. Had it all been preconceived, arranged, and rehearsed for years, no such spectacular show could have been imagined. Thousands and thousands were drunk with anger, as thousands were drunk with spirits. London was loose, and England felt that Government was hiding something from her.

Minister Dalton's threats (and he had been guilty of language not only undiplomatic, but downrightly rude) had been spread-headed in the press. The treatment of the British ambassador at Washington had been exaggerated, and it was stated that now his very life was in danger. The tearing down of the arms at the consulates at two small seaboard cities in the states had been taken as an insult to the British nation. The *Cumberland* affair at Panama had swelled from its accidental happening to a national affront. American troops were ready to enter in force British territory in the Northwest; some had already crossed

the line! The *Cumberland* had left Panama and returned to Bermuda. It was said she had narrowly missed being blown up at the canal entrance.

A very sudden change had come over the conservative English press — a startling change. In the last three or four days there was hardly a paper in England that had not by its utterances flourished the torch, or at least laid fuel on the fire.

Wednesday's fast four-days steamers had brought a large number of returning Englishmen, who to all appearances were flying home. In the holds were bales of copies of *The Voice* and *The Verdict*, and in some mysterious way, at almost all the big cities, hundreds of copies had appeared pasted upon the dead walls and hoardings. The people had awakened to find the apparently insulting and angry voices of their cousins shouting at them at their own street corners. Even *The Times* had stepped aside from its usual phlegmatic course of reasoning, and its leader had begun with the words, "They have gone too far." The Manchester *Watchman* had appeared with a circumstantial account, giving the details of a plan for the immediate overrunning of Canada, and the cable had flashed subsequently a rumour — for it was nothing more at first — that the lanyard had been pulled, and

that the guns of two mighty warships had spoken on the high seas.

The tone of the European press at first had changed from mild surprise at England's lethargy to ridicule at her lack of national spirit. The French had laughed outright. But even that volatile nation, so long used to sowing the wind, could never have reaped such a whirlwind as that which Great Britain had garnered so suddenly. To the surprise of the world, Scotland, and even Ireland, were agitated to their hearts' core, and in the latter country there had been riots, mob had met mob in the streets of Cork and Belfast two days before; but the loyalty of the Irish was predominant and overwhelming. The first blaze of insurrection had sunk to a merely dying ember.

War! War! was on all lips. Many shops that bore American signs had been sacked and looted. The word "Yankee" was enough to stir all those who heard it to cries of hatred and ridicule. And Parliament debated, debated almost tremblingly at its own delay, for outside could be heard the uproar of the angry voices. Every one knew, however, that it could have but one end. The night of the 5th of January shall never be forgotten.

While the excitement was at its height in Trafalgar Square, two women and a young man had

watched all the day and late into the night from the windows of a tall hotel at the corner. Mrs. Crayl-Hamilton and Lady Montague, with pale faces, had hoped and waited, hoped and prayed. They had been schoolmates as girls in America; since they were children they had been the dearest friends. Every one remembered the two weddings in St. George's Chapel that had followed each other so closely, and how the papers had then spoken of the events as "two new alliances." It had been happy indeed for them, for their husbands were the closest of companions. Even in their married life they were not separated, for their two estates adjoined.

Crayl-Hamilton had been the conservative whip in Parliament for the past two years. Well liked and well respected by every one who knew him, he had been more or less a power. During the anxiety of the last few days his voice had been heard advocating the peace policy of Lord Abberly, the leader of the opposition, counselling caution and thundering denunciation of any hasty action. Once he had started to read excerpts from a letter which, as he declared, came from the ablest pen in America. But he had been almost cried down for introducing family advice into affairs of State, for the letter that he had attempted to read was from his father-in-law, Edward Norton; and it was Edward Norton's

daughter who waited with her friend, Lady Montague at the window of the tall hotel.

Lord Montague was colonel of the Grenadiers; his wife, the beautiful Miss Remsen of New York, had more at stake perhaps than had Mrs. Crayl-Hamilton, for her two brothers were both in the army of the United States, and her cousin, Charles Taintor, was also. And, moreover, the latter was engaged to a young girl she loved, Miss Carntyne. On the desk in a corner of the room lay some open letters, two from her brothers, and one postmarked Canada, from her girl friend. Over and over again she read them. The young men had written their own feelings plainly, and they had written as if they had expressed the feelings of a class. Yet she saw the hopelessness of their letters' tone; with tears she had read a few of the messages that they contained, — "Regards to dear old Basil," or "Love to all the good people at Ripley Court." She remembered the gay hunting week in Surrey, when her brother had won the hearts of all the young Englishmen by his good riding and his good fellowship. And yet her brother and her husband might soon be marching against each other, and hundreds of others on either side, just like them, with the words, "Slay! Slay! Kill! Kill!" in their throats.

The young man who was with them had gone

down to the street and reappeared at intervals throughout the afternoon. Still an undergraduate at Harvard, John Taintor, a younger brother of Charlie Taintor, was a favourite cousin of Lady Montague. He had spoken little, but his flushed face had shown at times the surge of the feelings held within him. He hated, and yet he pitied that wild clamouring mob below in the Square, and yet he would have hated and pitied it much the same if it had been one of his own countrymen. Such bitter sorrow mingled with this feeling that sobs sometimes choked in his throat, the way sobs do in a bad unwelcome dream. There was a sense of unreality about it. Dimly he foresaw what it all might mean. He who had played so gladly for all America at the new Lord's Grounds, might soon be playing unwillingly in a larger field.

It was just before midnight when the door of the room opened, and Crayl-Hamilton entered. His wife ran to him with arms outstretched, he kissed her quickly on the brow, then he sank down in a chair for a moment, leaning his head heavily forward in his hands. Young Taintor poured out a glass of brandy and held it toward him. The exhausted man — for twelve hours he had not tasted food — took it and gulped it down.

"We have gone mad," he groaned hoarsely, "mad! Oh, the fools, the fools! Cannot they

see the shadow of the coming ruin to us both?" He looked up at the young man quickly. "God help my country, and God help yours!" he added. "There has been an action at sea between two battle ships. The *Cornwallis* has sunk the *Nebraska!*"

Mechanically, young Taintor had poured some brandy for himself. He caught the other's eye. Through his mind there flashed the picture of another time when they had drunk together — it was before the final international cricket match, when some one had exclaimed in the happy Anglo-Saxon fashion, "May the best men win!" Why should that thought intrude itself upon him now? Why should the picture of that happy moment come before his eyes? Again the sob was in his throat. But he put down his glass, and crossing to Lady Montague took her extended hand. Her eyes were full of tears.

"Good-by," he said. "You understand."

And then his cousin came to him. In a sisterly fashion she clasped her hands about his neck and laid her cheek against his.

"Good-by, dear Jack."

"Good-by, Elise."

Crayl-Hamilton arose from his chair. "You are going?" he asked awkwardly.

"Calais to-night — just got time — America to-morrow, if I can get there," the boy replied. "Good-by."

The men shook hands. Without turning, the younger left the room. As he plunged down the stairs he ran into some one trotting hastily upward. It was Sir John Boltwood, the senior admiral of the fleet. He turned to speak to Taintor, but the boy had gone, not recognizing his old friend in his haste.

"It's come at last, God help us both!" said the admiral as he entered the room. "There was no stemming the tide. Just listen to that — they've got the news!"

The voices of the crowd were rising in a swelling, exultant roar. Sir John beckoned Crayl-Hamilton to the window.

"Where was our young friend going so fast just now?" he asked.

"Charlie? Home — to America, I mean."

"Home," repeated the admiral, "to more of this, I dare say." He pointed down at the seething, cheering multitude.

All over England the news spread the next morning; the rumour that the papers had printed on Wednesday had become a certainty. At seven o'clock that evening the battle ship *Cornwallis*, battered, and pierced, and dented, had limped into Halifax harbour, her forward compartments filled with water from a great gash where she had been rammed just abaft the bows.

She had been in action — that was plain enough. But no one had been allowed to board her — only her captain had gone ashore.

It was thirty-two minutes past eleven when the admiralty and the war office were informed in London; five minutes later the despatch was given out on the floor of the House of Commons. Three minutes before the chimes struck twelve, war had been declared. The British ambassador was cabled to demand his papers and to return.

Germany, France, and Russia shed no tears of anguish at the news.

And now the unexpected occurred.

It could not be called a reaction, for there was no change in public feeling; but the next day the crowds had subsided, the people were only grim and determined. The huge new war office building was busy. From India, Australia, and South Africa came messages of loyalty. The contagion had spread over the red-mapped countries. It was magnificent, as the gathering of a storm cloud is magnificent. It inspired the latent war spirit of those who had hesitated to the last. The distant scattered threads of England's colonial fabric were knit together once again. Millions of men and millions of money were at her call.

CHAPTER VI

THE MEETING IN THE FOG

CAPTAIN CASPER PATTERSON of the *Nebraska* was a man of many peculiarities. Chief among them was a sublime belief that no one knew more upon certain subjects than he did himself. Consequently he worried. Now, when the captain of a warship worries, the position of executive officer becomes no sinecure — the man who holds it requires some attributes of sainthood.

The *Nebraska*, though almost an old vessel, taking into account the short lives of modern warships, was in most excellent trim and condition. She had been completely overhauled in 1907, given new boilers, and fitted with oil-fuel furnaces. Her complement was full. Yet she was not a happy ship; there was grumbling in the wardroom, and grumbling in the forecastle, but most often grumbling in the cabin.

The executive officer, Lieutenant Commander Edgar, and Lieutenant Myers, the navigator, were both able men, but they did not get on too well together. The former had a temper, and, sad to

relate, allowed his feelings to master him at times. So often had his orders been contradicted by the captain, and so often had he been deprived of his privileges, that he had taken refuge more than once in a prolonged fit of sulks, instead of doing what he should have done — quietly have remonstrated. But for the matter of that, he had plenty of sympathizers; there was not a watch officer on board the *Nebraska* who was not accustomed to having the deck taken away from him without a word of warning.

Long before he had reached his forty-ninth year, Captain Patterson, by all rights, should have been in his grave. He had crowded his mind and his life so full of petty details, that no wonder his hair was white, his digestion gone, and that insomnia had marked him. At sea he always moved his quarters from the cabin to the little room abaft the pilot-house, and when nearing shore, despite the fact that he had one of the ablest navigators in the service, it was said that he slept with the lights blazing overhead and his fingers resting on the chart. At all times, in the night, he was wont to appear on the bridge, a ghostly apparition in slippered feet, with great-coat drawn over his pajamas. He had an irritating way of asking the officer standing watch if everything was "going right, eh? eh?" He assumed much the manner at times of the hotel

proprietor who asks the same question of a guest — he almost pleaded for assurance.

More than once when weighing anchor, or mooring ship, he had interrupted the officer of the deck and shouted directions from the bridge, for all the world like a tug-pilot, or perhaps he might give a dilatory yank to the telegraph handle, with an impatient signal to the engine room, as if he had expected the engineers below to be possessed of the powers of thought transference.

Personally, to meet him, Captain Patterson was delightful, but his guest always perceived an overstrained effort at politeness, especially at table. If the guest came from the wardroom, just as he was about to depart (perhaps he might already have stepped through the compartment door), Captain Patterson would surely recall him. Tweaking nervously at his pointed, gray beard, he would request some petty explanation or suggest some different way of doing things from that which was then in force. It was inevitable, his nerves demanded exercise of some sort, and finding fault appeased him. So, notwithstanding the fact that the food in the cabin was most excellent, an invitation to dine with the "old man" was more dreaded than welcome.

While lying at anchor in the wide roadstead off Mount Desert, Maine, on Sunday, the 3d of January, Captain Patterson had received a telegraphic

order from the department to proceed to sea, in order to test the wireless system that had been erected at Sorrento, the little town on one of the islands across the bight. Also he was ordered to make tests of the "Ewart locator," and the new "Westland obliterator," the first a device for locating and ascertaining the size, direction, and speed of any vessel within a radius of one hundred miles — a method entirely separate from the wireless system of communication. The "obliterator" was intended to destroy, by overwhelming or burning out, an enemy's aerial plant. It was entirely new and practically untried.

Rather upset at receiving these orders, which seemed trivial in the face of the condition of national affairs, Captain Patterson got up steam and departed. When fifty miles from shore, a fog so dense and opaque closed down that it was almost impossible to read the compass and the binnacle light was turned on at two o'clock in the afternoon.

It was just about this time that the annunciator in the chart room started the slightest vibration of the delicate needle point, showing that a vessel of steel construction had come within the radius of its operating field. A few minutes later the locator placed the direction as N.E. by N., and a swift calculation showed the distance to be eighty-eight miles, and that the speed of the ap-

proaching vessel was not less than seventeen knots an hour. That the *Nebraska's* presence had been detected by the stranger was made known within an hour or two, for over the wireless there came the letters of a signal code. Captain Patterson was on the bridge when the report was brought to him. At once he sent for the electrician and the navigator. The executive officer, knocking his heels nervously together at the other end of the bridge, completely shrouded in the gloom of the fog, had asked no questions.

The midshipman who brought the wireless message to Captain Patterson was still standing at the latter's elbow. He looked over the side of the weather-cloth down at the deck. The edges of the turret below could not be discerned, and the brown muzzles of the great guns had disappeared. The military top, but twenty feet overhead, was non-existent; even the captain's face but a few feet from him was blurred and indistinct. The midshipman volunteered a question: —

"Ever seen a fog like this, sir?" he asked.

"No, nor you either," returned the captain, shortly. "Heavy clouds up aloft and this confounded —" Then he added as if it was part of the same sentence, "Messenger!"

A little figure jumped out of the blankness.

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"Go find Mr. Myers and Mr. Talcot — I sent

for them five minutes ago! And oh, Mr. Edgar!" he called to the executive, "we'll have the afternoon drill as usual."

Before the boy could turn, however, two dim, wraithlike figures appeared, and the navigator and the electrician each saluted and stood waiting.

"Mr. Myers," said the captain, shortly, "just received a message from British battle ship, which I am not going to answer. I think this is a good chance, sir, to try an experiment with the — what-you-may-call-it — the — "

"The obliterator, sir," put in the electrician. "Yes, sir; the batteries are ready." He started as if to turn away, and then came back suddenly to the captain's side. "We might try to burn his wires out, or at least to interfere, sir. You see, if he has the old vertical system, his coherers — "

The captain interrupted him.

"We are not asking for a lecture, Mr. Talcot," he said. "Go below, sir, and begin your experiments; report to me the results in good plain English. Mr. Myers, stand by me here on the bridge."

A few minutes later the recording needle of the locator on the *Nebraska* showed some remarkable developments.

Out into space the nullifying electrical waves had been projected. The needle swayed and wavered like a compass card, pulled hither and

thither by a strong magnet; then it settled stationary, apparently as useless as a broken toy. From the joints of the wireless system there had come a flash of electrical discharge. The electrician closed off the obliterator — something had taken place which was beyond his comprehension. Instantly his fingers sought the switchboard, and he pressed the key; he tried to spell the ship's name. If any vessel carrying the usual network of the universal system had been within fifty miles, there would have been some response, he reasoned. If any huge mass of steel had been within one hundred, its presence would have been recorded; but there was nothing. In three minutes he was on deck feeling his way along the superstructure to the bridge. At the top of the ladder he met the executive.

"Good lord, Talcot!" exclaimed the latter, "you'll break your neck, bounding about this way. Ever been in the steam room of a Turkish bath?"

Talcot did not reply. "Where is the captain?" he asked hoarsely. "Did you ever —"

"Well, sir," grunted the captain, impatiently, as he recognized who it was who had touched him on the sleeve, "what results?"

"Most unexpected, sir," replied the electrician. "You see, the — what we might call the voltic strength of the current, perhaps through some

miscalculation, and owing, I dare say, to the — what one might term the cross vibrations — it is really a most marvellous thing."

"Results, sir, results!" thundered the captain.

"We burnt out our own system, sir; and owing, as I said before, to the — I am quite led to believe —"

Then the captain interrupted him. "Damn careless of you, Talcot! What about him?" he asked impatiently, with a jerk of his finger over the port side of the ship, toward the north. "A nice time to get in a mess like this. Why the devil —"

"If my surmise is correct, sir," answered the electrician, "we have burnt out his."

"Sure of it?"

"I couldn't be certain, but —"

"Damn these new-fangled experiments!" interjected Captain Patterson, hotly. "You mean to say that you don't know where he is now?"

"No, sir; and I doubt if he knows where we are. There is still the old microphone detector, that will tell us when he is within a dozen miles or so — we can rely on that."

For a moment there was silence, and the captain fell to thinking. In the old days, experience and guesswork had been necessary under certain circumstances, in many exigencies of seamanship. There had been a time when eye and

ear and general knowledge, assisted by the imagination, dictated the course of action to be followed. Science had done away with a great deal of the romance of the old steaming and the old sailing days. Chance and guesswork had disappeared before the accuracy of recording instruments and the tell-tale needles. But now so far as the *Nebraska* and the on-coming vessel were concerned, science herself had thrown back the years of advancement. The long-extinct feeling of uncertainty had taken its place, the fact was this: within a very short space of time, two vessels, whose positions were absolutely unknown to each other, would probably be within hailing distance—that is, if the stranger held to the course she had been steering. The *Nebraska* was still roaring along, almost due east.

The captain was glad that he was upon the bridge. It was his responsibility now, and he was not to be bothered by the dictation of juniors who knew more about the situation than he did. He swelled proudly with the gratification of the feeling that all eyes were now on him. He thrilled through and through with the excitement of the moment. For an hour or more he revelled in the new sensation. Then an ensign came hurriedly on the bridge.

The old-fashioned and reliable microphone had detected the presence of a steamer, heading

S.E. by S., two points off the port bow, only ten miles away. A few minutes later the bugle sounded, and the men went to quarters for the usual drill. Immediately following, out in the fog, there roared the blast of a great steam whistle.

But, leaving the *Nebraska* here let us take a glimpse at the private journal of the executive officer of H.M.S. *Cornwallis*, at least that part of it which within a few months was made public for all to read. We find the following:—

"At 2.30 in the afternoon watch, heavy fog set in, no one on board remembered seeing anything like it; at 3.30 presence of a vessel was shown by the Craydon indicator, S.E. by S. That the vessel was evidently a man-of-war, and presumably an American, was made evident by the fact that there would be no large steamer of any transatlantic line that would steer the course that she was steering. A few minutes later a wireless message was sent to her telling who we were. In case of her being English (for it was known that the *Venerable* that was to take our place at Halifax was on her way up from Nassau, and might be to the westward of the Banks), the signal for the day was given. No response was made to either. A few minutes later, the executive officer reported to the captain that suddenly our wireless system had burned out, the coherers

being badly disturbed, and the Craydon instrument rendered useless by the force of a current that had been turned into the wires. A hurried examination showed that the main dynamo wires were not short-circuited, and that no accident aboard the ship could explain the phenomenon.

"The captain quickly called a consultation in his cabin. There was but one opinion, — some great force, ascribed to a Yankee invention, had been employed. To all minds it could have but one meaning, — an American battle ship had been lying off the north coast of Maine for the last five days. From every standpoint, the stranger was likely this same warship. Our presence must have been known to him before the Craydon instrument had detected his. The destruction of our wires could have come from but intention on his part. Captain Blythe reasoned that it could have but one meaning, and all the other officers agreed. Something must have occurred to cause the beginning of hostilities. The crew was called to quarters; the magazines were opened; the captain in person visited every part of the ship, and explained the situation. All officers and gun captains were to observe the utmost calmness and attention; he warned them that an action might take place within the next hour or two. Orders to fire were only to be taken from the bridge or conning-tower.

Leaving the men at their stations, the captain went upon the bridge at 4.15. The engines were reduced to half-speed at 4.30, and lookouts were stationed in every part of the ship. At ten minutes of five, a large vessel was shown by the resounder to be six miles off the starboard bow. In order to be on the safe side, a few minutes later, the ship was brought down to steerageway only. At twelve minutes past five exactly, an on-coming vessel was heard two points forward of the starboard quarter. Full speed ahead was now given to the engine room, in order to cross the stranger's bows; at the same time the starboard guns were trained in her direction. At quarter past five the forward lookout, who was invisible in the fog, shouted that there was a big steamer almost aboard of us. Those on the bridge heard distinctly the sound of a bugle. The whistle was blown, and an instant later we were rammed just abaft the bows. As the collision took place the forward 7.2 gun of the main deck battery was discharged. The shock of the collision was so great that the *Cornwallis* heeled nearly forty degrees to port, and the men at the guns were thrown off their feet. The two forward guns were fired electrically, but at the moment of their highest angle, and neither of their shots took effect, although the blast blew the port anchor of the ramming vessel from its

fastenings, and it narrowly missed falling upon our deck. As it fell it carried outboard a few fathoms of cable, which led every one to suppose, owing to the similarity of sound, that the stranger's machine guns had opened upon us. Her engines must have been reversed, for she backed away almost clear of us, and our forward compartments filling at once, carried us well down by the head. There was great consternation. At one moment it appeared as if the *Cornwallis* was about to sink. Before the men could regain their stations on the starboard side the stranger had swept along it, slewing the broadside guns out of position, and breaking or maiming half the gun mounts. Whether there were any hails or not at this moment is a matter of conjecture, for the impact had in some way short-circuited the electrical connection with the whistle, and in the roar and confusion following nothing could be heard. As the attack and intention of ramming could be read in but one way (only with the idea of sinking us), the guns in the after turret that were trained athwart ships were ordered to be fired. They were so close that they extended over the deck of the enemy, for such we now believed her to be, and both projectiles went clear of her. Had they waited two seconds later, her after turret would have been put out of action. Up to this time the enemy

had not replied, no shot having come on board the *Cornwallis;* but suddenly fire was opened from the enemy's quick-firing battery, and our superstructure and upper decks were full of bursting shells and flying fragments. Lieutenant Ketridge, who was in command of the starboard torpedo division, launched a torpedo. The enemy's engines were reversing, and ours still going ahead, and in the short space of a few seconds we had swung again athwart her bows at a distance of not more than fifty yards. The torpedo exploded against the enemy's starboard quarter. The concussion was terrific. The *Cornwallis* pitched forward in such a fashion that for the second time we thought we were about to sink. The attacking vessel must have been blown almost in two, for with a great hissing of steam and what appeared to be a series of explosions, she sank immediately. As now our engines had been stopped, we were almost gone into the vortex. The sudden ending of the affair, and the silence that succeeded the stopping of our steam whistle and the noise of the guns, was appalling. It was broken, however, by the cries from our wounded (eighteen of the afterguard and second division had been killed and forty-two were badly gashed by flying splinters and shell fragments). The men in the 'tween deck had been forced by the smoke and gases to come

up for air, and were at first in great confusion; but Lieutenant Brent, the officer in charge of the forward division, reported that the bulkheads had held and that we were in no danger of sinking. The fog was still so thick that the surface of the water could scarcely be discerned; but now it broke out into a soft, heavy rain, and the atmosphere cleared a little. All about us were bits of floating wreckage, and a boat being lowered, ten men, dazed and almost unconscious, were picked up, — a midshipman, badly wounded in the head, a boy, a boatswain's mate, and eight seamen. The midshipman died before he could speak, and the boatswain's mate and the others, who were on deck at the time of the torpedo's explosion, could give no explanation. All insisted that the *Nebraska's* crew (we now learned her name for the first time) were not at quarters, and that the ramming must have been an accident. All agreed, however, that the bugle had blown and that *they were going to their stations for drill*, but no ammunition had been served. There is the testimony of the whole crew of the *Cornwallis* in rebuttal, for the American certainly did open upon us with her light battery within three minutes of the time of the impact, and unless they had been expecting some such occurrence, it would have been impossible for her to have cast loose and provided her guns.

After waiting in the vicinity and sending out two more boats, but finding no one living, the *Cornwallis* was headed back for Halifax."

It was simply a recital of the events as they took place, without comment or opinion.

However it was brought about, the fatal error had been committed, the blunder made, the die cast, and five hundred good men had gone down in their great steel coffin. And, as we know, the untimely meeting in the fog had set the world aflame, and men of two great nations saw red and reached for weapons.

CHAPTER VII

THE LULL BEFORE THE STORM

WITHIN forty-eight hours of the receipt of the news of the loss of the *Nebraska* the United States had on paper the largest volunteer army the world ever saw or even dreamed of. But it was nothing more than a conglomeration of names collected mostly by people without authority, — mayors of large cities and small towns, selectmen of country villages, leaders of local political societies, and heads of labour brotherhoods. The State armouries had been turned into recruiting stations; but the uniformed regiments that were at once summoned to report were outnumbered twenty to one by the applicants for enlistment. All business was suspended. There was no thought of anything but war. Patriotism was rampant, but alas! without dignity or direction.

At Washington it was simply chaos. The President had called to consult with him all the generals on the active list who could be spared from local duties, and, under the advice of Mr. Crantz, he had summoned also many who

had retired from the army, and many prominent business men. Every practised hand, every experienced brain, was needed. But brains could not take the place of machinery, and machinery was lacking. The country was up, but not up in arms. It would have made European military men laugh aloud to see the reports that came in from the military districts in which the various states were hastily divided by the governors. New York state alone offered three hundred and seventy-five thousand volunteers with a reserve of fifty thousand men, but there were not forty thousand modern rifles that she could call upon. Some states had no ammunition, and practically no arms at all; and there was an entire lack of modern artillery. Such a state of unpreparedness was appalling. The nation stood aghast at its own innocuousness. It had little else than money and numbers to fall back upon.

The mistaken policy of curtailment, dictated by the ever present fear of militarism, made the present huge effort a laughable spectacle. It was so tremendously warlike and so tremendously useless.

Along the Canadian frontier the American towns assembled homeguards, armed with anything that they could get hold of, sporting rifles and old Springfield muskets. Here and there a military company was armed with small-caliber

modern rifles and smokeless powder; but, although the country was turned into a vast military camp, north, south, east, and west, it was nothing more than an uniformed, unarmed, and, in many cases, a most disorderly mob.

Within a week swift changes began to show. The remark of a rather witty foreign writer about the population seemed to become a fact. Without any regard to qualification, there were colonels appointed by scores, and lesser officers by the tens of hundreds. Everybody wanted everything done with the utmost haste. "On to Canada!" shrieked *The Voice* and *The Verdict*. Many of the wildest hotheads counselled the preparation of an immense fleet and an immediate invasion of England. "Rescue the Emerald Isle!" cried an Irish member of Congress. If the feeling and the spirit that had been aroused had not been so intense and the numerical strength so menacing, Europe might well have held its sides and laughed. If such an unwieldy force of men should ever invade Canada, — a proceeding urged and counselled by the hysterical press, — they could not get out of their own way; it was this fact that the wiser heads began to see. It was the wealth of war material and not the dearth of it, that was the difficulty. For a week longer it was the process of eliminating, cutting down, lopping off, and disbanding that occupied

the heads of the military departments. They did not require, and could scarcely use, one-third of the offered material, and even for that one-third they were not prepared. So the strange sight was presented of a country preparing to embark upon the greatest war of its history, endeavouring to persuade the majority of would-be fighters to stay at home and be content to mind their own business. The national authorities spent most of their time in saying, "We don't want you!" and the politicians bent their best efforts in presenting requests for the preferment of their friends and henchmen.

The President found it difficult to snatch an hour in which to consult with the real military men of the regular army, so besieged was he by would-be generals and would-be holders of lower grades. At last, in sheer desperation and under the advice of the Vice-President, he formed a national committee, a personal staff as commander-in-chief of the army and navy, and turned over to them the whole conduct of military affairs.

Disdaining the remonstrance of Congress, with one fell swoop he eliminated politics from the discussion. And it was time he did so. The Western senators were declaring that the Eastern men were getting all the fat appointments; the representatives of the South declared they were

being ignored. The hyphenated brethren began to show bitter jealousies. If the hope of the party in power had been that a foreign war would divert ill feeling at home, they found themselves mistaken. The utter incapacity of many people who had been elected to positions of high authority was shown; yet when the President made his enforced and momentous decision, a great outcry arose. "Aristocrats were being brought to the fore; the college man was being preferred to the graduate of the public schools;" the young West Pointer was being placed over the heads of the political amateur general. Bureaucracy, it was claimed, had taken the place of true democracy. But soon the fact began to be apparent that some order was being sifted out of the chaos, although much uncertainty and turmoil yet remained. A lesson had been learned during the brief Spanish War; there was the nucleus of a semi-veteran army, and although there were some aged soldiers, who had seen service during the war of the Rebellion, most of the appointments were given to young and active men. Many selections were bad, of course, but the wisdom of placing a prominent railroad man at the head of the transport system, for instance, instead of a would-be military ex-senator, was soon made evident. The Secretary of Transportation resigned his portfolio; there was a great

howl when the Secretary of the Treasury followed suit and the head of the North American Trust Company succeeded him.

Three weeks went by, and not a shot was fired. And now Europe was again surprised. The English fleet at Bermuda did not move. Canada remained uninvaded. It was rumoured that peace negotiations were on foot, but the grim and businesslike preparations of Great Britain showed that these rumours were groundless. She was hastening slowly; the lessons of the Boer War had told her that "blundering through" was terribly expensive. There was one momentous hour, or minute, when the peace parties — for peace parties will exist at the beginning of every war — picked up hope. Lord Abberly and Crayl-Hamilton had gained the ear of the King; ex-Ambassador Taintor, and Edward Norton had been closeted with the President; arbitration, it was rumoured, had been proposed. The London *Times* and a few conservative papers seemed to have cooled their sudden wrath; a few papers in America had slightly modified their tone.

But the turbulent waters could not be soothed by the pouring of any diplomatic oil. Neither King nor President ruled the people. The hopes of the pacifiers were soon dashed and dissipated. The sudden development of the situation made

impossible for either side the victorious rush with which Japan had begun her onslaught upon Russia. There was no preconceived plan such as the Boers had made and nearly carried to success, in South Africa. Caught in their labouring day clothes they had to work their fields and gather their grain before they turned their ploughshares into swords. The small American fleet that had been manœuvring in the Gulf had been ordered to Panama, and a little gunboat that had been left on patrol duty on the Venezuelan coast, the *Montpelier*, had run across one of the scouts that had been sent out by the British admiral in charge of the squadron of Trinidad; and, although the *Pactolus* was a third-class cruiser, the *Montpelier*, instead of running, which to tell the truth would have been impracticable, had turned and fought; and, as luck would have it, the third shot from her forward six-inch gun had traversed the English vessel's boilers. And, although the unequal action was maintained for some minutes, the *Pactolus* had been forced to surrender, and, with her prize in tow, the *Montpelier* had entered the harbour of La Guaira, where the volatile Venezuelans, who had heretofore been restrained by the strong German influence from taking sides, went off their heads completely and did much rejoicing. All Caraccas, on foot, on horseback, and by train, piled down across the mountains to

the seacoast, and waved and shouted and fire-worked to their hearts' content.

Previous to this, although Mexico had declared her neutrality, the intermittent republics on the Isthmus had with much formality and many resolutions declared for the United States. Colombia and Venezuela now followed suit. Brazil, however, remained doubtful and then came over to the American side. The Argentines declared their neutrality; and Chili was, if anything, pro-British in feeling. Ecuador and Peru waited for the turn of affairs before taking any action.

How *The Voice* and *The Verdict* and all their many followers roared and flaunted the national colours! The little victory was magnified until adjectives were exhausted, the size of type ridiculous, and the red, white, and blue issues cleared out the supplies of ink.

The plucky commander of the little *Montpelier* was offered swords and honours. His name was sung at the music halls and toasted in canteens and bar-rooms. The people had roared, and they craved more to roar at.

The day following the "victory," all the big trunk lines to the north were busy with crowded trains of cheering soldiery, hurrying to the camps on the Canadian frontier. Within three days sixty thousand men were ready to cross the Niagara River in boats, for the great and costly

bridges below the falls had been destroyed. Another great army had gathered at Ogdensburg, just across from the Canadian town of Prescott. A third was following the line of the St. John River directly to the north, and had entered St. John without opposition. The great American lake steamers were receiving the armaments that for years had been ready for them.

So long the border-land had been united, and so many people from both countries had mingled together, north and south, — their money for years having been a common medium of exchange, — that there was no cry of terror and abandonment of homes. Almost without opposition, except at one or two places where shots were exchanged across the river with few casualties, the great army of invasion in three divisions prepared for the campaign that lay before it. The daring destruction of the Canadian canals had precluded any hope on the part of the English naval authorities of obtaining the supremacy of the lakes, but the policy of defence was well known. Montreal and Quebec were to be held if possible. A British fleet controlled the lower St. Lawrence absolutely, and Nova Scotia and Newfoundland were to be maintained at all hazards. Halifax was impregnable by sea, its great garrison had been doubled and trebled in the month that had now passed since the actual

declaration of war. The peninsula of Nova Scotia, guarded by the great forests of New Brunswick, had been strongly fortified and intrenched, from Cumberland to Northumberland Strait. But English and Canadians had seen the impossibility of defending the vast frontier to the westward. British Columbia had been given up without a blow—all but the island of Vancouver.

Along the Yukon the great preponderance in numbers of the Americans had made all resistance vain, and the American flag was everywhere.

Where the Fenian raiders had set foot in 1866 at Fort Erie a different sort of force was soon to land.

It seemed now as if all the old battle-grounds would be fought over once more. The Plains of Abraham might see a greater spectacle than when Wolfe marched his red-coated Grenadiers out in full sight of the waiting Frenchmen.

"Avenge Montgomery!" was a fine catchword for the American army. Even the bitterness felt against the great traitor Arnold was forgotten, and his name was almost rehabilitated as there appeared in print the glorious record of the little, freezing, starving army that had clawed and clambered over stockade and rampart, almost a century and a half before, and whose dauntless bravery had been in vain.

The restoration of the Philippines to their in-

habitants, with the dire results before mentioned, had rendered it unnecessary for the United States to maintain a large Asiatic squadron, and the vessels in the Pacific had rendezvoused at Hawaii, where they waited orders. The few ships of the European squadron that had not been ordered home were now blockaded in neutral ports; but the navy department was doing its best to put its fleet of battle-ships and cruisers into shape. Millions of dollars were voted for the increase of gun shops and powder works. Sledge and hammer, forge and lathe, everywhere were turning out munitions of war instead of articles of commerce. Inventors and "cranks" of all kinds flocked to Washington, the departments were besieged by them.

But the most startling and unexpected thing about the course of events was the momentous waiting. It lent a nerve-destroying suspense and unreality to all preparations and provisions. The giants had gone into sudden training, — muscles must be hardened and wind improved for the struggle. There were to be no useless beatings of the air, no puffing of prematurely tired lungs. The champions were being, in sporting parlance, "sprung for the meeting." Even the sparring for the first opening would begin with caution. There were to be no sudden developments, no blind, mad rush that had been predicted. All

this astonished Europe, and almost dismayed the importunate Englishmen at home and the eager Imperialists abroad. They had expected the bombardment of the American coast cities within a fortnight; they had hoped to hear the crash of falling buildings in Boston, New York, Charleston, and Savannah. But loss of money and mere blood-shedding did not mean modern war altogether, although blood and money were still to be factors.

It was impossible to attack the vulnerable points that European nations, with perhaps one exception, Russia, held in common — the food supply. The United States could cut herself off from all contact with foreign shores and live, to all intents and purposes, forever. The tumbling about of brick and mortar on the seaboard would not disturb the resources of the country beyond the reach of the flying missiles. The exacting of great ransom, a legitimate and monstrous style of brigandage, would not frighten people whose purses were untouched by the necessity for subscription to the ransom fund.

The great war game that had been played so often upon paper for points and honours was to be played as if for the same stakes. The wisest knew that not until the sum was ready for the totaling, and the final score made up, would the actual losses, gains, and benefits, if any, be awarded.

The great coup of the Americans so far had been that successful, if inglorious, plot that had led to the blowing up of the four most important locks of each of the great Canadian canals.

At least a dozen fast steamers were being prepared to act as commerce destroyers, that were to be now sent out to cruise against the British shipping, much of which had been confiscated in American ports, three big liners being taken in New York. But all over the world England had sent warning, and from every direction her steamers were speeding homeward. It now was known that the British Government was purchasing and chartering every available bottom, and would soon have a fleet of transports whose numbers would run up well into the hundreds. She bought right and left from the maritime nations of Europe, until the market was all but exhausted; Germany and France, however, for obvious reasons, reserving the best of their great steamers. The mobilizing of the vast numbers of colonial volunteers went on steadily in Australia, India, and Africa. The reënforcements of the garrisons continued without interruption.

That very soon some concerted movement would take place, was evident. Guarded by the cordon of her immense home fleet, England felt safe from attack. And yet, depending upon the outside world for her sustenance, the war office and the

admiralty board were working hard upon plans that would keep open the line of communication with the sources of supply. How much Great Britain had depended upon America in every way, was soon made evident in the rising prices and the shortage in edible commodities. The shoe pinched hard at first.

Europe also soon began to feel the expected result of the interruption of commercial relations with the United States. But Germany had so well nursed and fostered her South American interests that she feared little else than discomfort. The great importance of South America as a meat-producing and wheat-raising country began to show; the Hungarian and Siberian wheat crop, also, had been tremendous. The menace to Europe at large that might have taken place if the English-speaking nations had gone to war a dozen or so years previously, at the time of the struggle in Manchuria, was, in a measure, averted. A few great economists, however, began to predict final disaster, in long articles filled with statistics, and harking back mostly to the lesson of the past.

But a prophecy of ruin, if spelled in the sky, would have been disregarded by the English and American people at large; they still saw red.

Edward Norton summed his ideas up in an article called the "Final Reaping." Thus he

wrote: "Add the numbers of the killed and wounded to the losses in money, subtract acres won from acres lost, balance the gains in what is called 'prestige' by the destruction of all advancement, arrange the facts and figures for presentation to posterity, and set the details in type to be ready for the pages of history, and then, when the last gun has sounded, there will be called in the great jury of award, the ultimate council of adjudication. Honours may be even, but losses irreparable, and alleged advantages inconsistent with the cost of effort. Let us stop and think." He pointed out the present position of China, Russia, and Japan; he showed how England and America had averted the great war in 1905. He drew able and shrewd deductions. He told unvarnished truth.

And at all this *The Voice* and *The Verdict* hooted and cried, "On to Montreal!" and raved about driving the enemy into the sea. So thousands of men in new uniforms of yellowish green marched with death-dealing, new, little, untried rifles across their untried shoulders, and shouted at the sight of bits of bunting while their hearts leaped with a glorious tingling at the music of national airs. Their brains reeled with the intoxication of their own cheering; they forgot other passions in the mad thirst and desire to fight.

Some wise men shook their heads, some women

wept, and the world with eyes upon the arena waited for the spectacle.

Germany, France, and Russia (the latter eager to be a witness rather than a participator in misfortune), within nudging distance of one another, kept silently in touch, listening for the maddened roar that would mean the exhausting of the giant voices that spoke one mighty tongue, whose owners' hands soon to be at one another's throats, if clasped together, could lead the world to the ends of peace, and dictate policies of good-will and justice to people who spoke not their common language.

But the crash could not be postponed much longer; no battle had yet occurred, but when the simultaneous crossing of the main division of the American army on to Canadian soil took place, numerous small skirmishes followed. The great division to the eastward quartered at St. John, moved first, making a feint toward Montreal. The Canadian army, that with the exception of ten regiments of infantry and two of artillery were volunteers, retreated from Ottawa down the river, upon the advance of the great division, proceeding north along the road from Prescott to Kemptville, numbering perhaps forty thousand men. The Canadians formed a line connecting the Ottawa River with the St. Lawrence along the boundary of the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, in the peninsula of Vaudreuil. The

capital was abandoned by the military, and thirty thousand Americans marched northward and occupied it without opposition. The main division however, kept to the eastward and dividing again into three parts marched from Gloucester, Kemptville, and Prescott. They numbered almost four times the force of the army that was to oppose them. American reënforcements poured in now from all the border states, and a division pushing northward crossed the Ottawa into the Province of Quebec. The New York troops moving from St. John drove before them a small force and established themselves at La Prairie and Longueuil, but attempted no bombardment of the city of Montreal that lay in full sight across the river. There were three small gunboats and one cruiser down the river on the edge of tide water. At a glance it could be seen that the positions of the British army and the island city were precarious —the war vessels, kept from entering the locks, could not long have lived under the fire of the shore batteries, and wisely dropped down the river.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LEARNING OF THE LESSON

It was the 6th of March. Although the winter had been exceedingly mild and open, and the lakes almost free from ice, there had been a heavy fall of snow during the last few days of February, and it was intensely cold. The roads were heavy, the drifts in some places almost impassable. The operations of the army in Canada had been greatly delayed.

Major Everet Remsen of the Twelfth United States Infantry was standing before the open fireplace of a small log-house that stood at the end of the little lane leading away from the main road to Vaudreuil. Looking out of the window, he could see some of the men of his regiment grouped about the barnyard, cooking their breakfasts at little fires, in places where they had cleared away the snow. In the big wood opposite were parked the guns of his brother's regiment, the Fourth Artillery. Major Remsen grumbled beneath his breath and looked impatiently at his watch. From the next room, where the coloured cook was

hard at work, came the odour of cakes and coffee. It was tantalizing and seductive. The major looked at his watch again and this time swore softly.

"Colby," he cried, "don't think we'll wait any longer. I'm hungry as a wolf. Breakfast ready?"

"Right you are!" answered a cheery voice. "I'm in here helping Griggs. Perhaps your brother couldn't come for some reason. No! by gad, talk of the — here he is now! Looks hungry, too."

As he spoke, the door opened with an inrush of fresh crisp air, and Colonel George Remsen entered, stamping his feet on the threshold.

"Hullo, Ev!" the colonel shouted, as soon as he had closed the door behind him; "you *are* comfortable. How comes it that you are not all messing together? Where are the rest?"

"Well, you see, it's this way," the infantry officer replied, "I was sent ahead with four companies the day before yesterday. Devil of an idea, splitting up the regiment; but the rest were to have been in last night. We acted as skirmish-line and advance-guard through that beastly snowstorm, and had an awful time of it. Two companies are on outpost down the road now. Three men short at roll-call. Bad weather to lose one's way in, isn't it?"

"Rather," replied the artilleryman. "Came near doing it myself. I hear that some of the volunteers suffered pretty bad. A few men froze to death. It isn't everybody that knows how to keep warm this kind of weather; there's a good deal of knack in it."

"You know Captain Colby, don't you?" asked the younger Remsen, suddenly, as a tall officer entered the room from the kitchen.

"Certainly," the colonel replied; "the last time I saw him was in a different kind of climate — eh, Colby?"

"Arizona," laughed the young officer; "and I confess I liked it better. I'll be glad when we get to Montreal and get some decent quarters."

"Won't get in without a fight," observed the colonel, laconically. "That smells like devilish good coffee. I don't agree with the general."

"About the coffee, or the fighting, George?" inquired his brother.

"The fighting," was the reply. "He thinks we are going to get in there without a shot being fired. I don't. It's hard to move troops, let alone guns, in this weather; and, though we are all about and around the place, we've got to cross the river somehow, and there are the gunboats to be reckoned with; it will be hard to get any concerted action, and they mean fight this time." Then he added, beneath his breath: "Poor fools,

all of us! — Bully cakes, these! — Heard from Mary?" he asked irrelevantly.

"Got a belated letter day before yesterday," replied the major, "sent from London via Paris and Cuba. Awfully sad letter, poor little girl! She seems all cut up. I judge, from what she says, that Montague and his regiment will be sailing somewhere shortly. Evidently, she thinks it disloyal to say where, so she didn't mention; but I take it Halifax. Nice fellow, Montague, but I wish to the devil he'd stay at home — women worry so. Hullo, here comes our regiment," he added, jumping up and looking out of the window of the little house.

"No, they're volunteers," corrected Captain Colby, "an Illinois regiment. I'll bet they've tumbled to the fact that soldiering is not all beer and kittles, especially this kind of weather. I don't see why we couldn't have waited till spring."

"That would never have done," said Colonel Remsen. "We would have been invaded ourselves before then; we had to do something. Destroying the canals so early was a bit of good luck. If they had even got their little cruisers and the gunboats up in the lakes. Phew! — just another thing or two might have happened. The great fleet that England is organizing will soon be heard from, you can bet on that. We will wake up some day."

"But talk of waking up," put in the major. "I don't feel as if I was altogether awake myself. The idea — " he stopped himself suddenly, as if he was afraid of saying too much, and stood holding his steaming cup of coffee and munching at a biscuit, watching the troops plod along through the snowdrifts, the collars of their greatcoats pulled up over their ears, and their trousers covered with snow almost to their waists. It was more than one regiment. It was a brigade going forward. Soon there came some light field-pieces and machine-guns, the horses plunging and heaving along, with bobbing heads, straining at their collars.

Suddenly the major spoke.

"Hullo, here's Colonel Chapin and the rest of the Twelfth. I suppose we'll soon be coming on now, but I know he'd like some coffee."

Colonel Remsen had taken a map out of his pocket and spread it upon his table. He looked up just in time to see four or five mounted men, followed by five or six companies of infantry turn from the road and come down the lane toward the house.

"I say, Everet, it looks like business. Do you know where McKim's division is posted? One of the cavalry scouts told me last night that they hold a line straight from the bridge here near that big distillery, to a point about twelve miles

ahead on the main road, and they certainly have thrown up earthworks along those hills, although the snow last night, has so covered things that you can't make them out. I marked the places down here with a pencil yesterday. The enemy hold the hills just ahead. Perhaps Colonel Chapin would like to have a look at it. I'll leave it for him. You can send it over to me in the course of half an hour or so. I must be getting back to my guns."

He threw on his heavy fur coat as he spoke, and, accompanied by his brother and Captain Colby, stepped to the door. Just as they came out into the open air, a man on a wiry brown horse came dashing up the road, riding in the opposite direction from that taken by the steadily on-pouring troops. His cow-boy hat was jammed down over his eyes, and about it was tied a gray woollen comforter, knotted under his chin. Seeing the group in the doorway, and the colonel and the rest of the mounted officers, he turned his horse's head and urged him through the little orchard, digging his spurs deep in his horse's side.

"Is this headquarters?" he asked breathlessly, saluting Colonel Chapin, whose attention had been called to the man's approach.

"No," the colonel replied; "headquarters are about four miles up the road."

"Good Lord," the man exclaimed, "my horse is nearly done for!"

"Where do you come from?" asked the colonel.

"From General McKim, sir. He's over here about six miles, on the edge of the stream. He's been trying to signal back, but the woods are too thick. So he sent me on with despatches to get there as quick as possible."

"What's going on?" asked one of the officers.

"Don't know, sir. But those Britishers seem to be moving or doing something. Good Lord, my horse is tired!"

That was evident. The man was heavy, and the little beast was nothing more than a pony. His head dropped forward, his flanks were heaving, and, despite the fact that the air was but a few degrees above zero, his matted hide was soaking with sweat, that was rapidly freezing. His knees were trembling.

"Here," said the colonel, quickly, turning to a young fellow mounted on a big chestnut nag. "Here, Smith, let this man have your horse. It seems to be important that he should get on."

The young orderly somewhat reluctantly slipped out of the saddle, and the despatch bearer took the bridle from his hands, and swinging himself up easily, started for the road.

"About four miles on, you say, sir?"

"Yes, red house on left side. Can't miss it," said the colonel.

The man plunged through the snow and disappeared. The last of the brigade, with the exception of a few tired stragglers, had gone on down the road. The colonel was dismounting. In fact, one foot was already on the ground, when out on the still morning air there sounded a heavy, jarring report. Its nearness was almost startling.

"One of our guns," cried the colonel, halting with one foot still in the stirrup.

"Must be," returned the elder Remsen, "although I didn't know we had any big guns over there in that direction."

But all doubts as to whom the first gun belonged to was set at rest that instant, for a second and louder report broke the stillness again; this time it seemed scarcely two miles away.

"A shell, by the Almighty!" cried Colonel Chapin, throwing himself back into his saddle. "They've opened up on the infantry brigade that's just gone by. Damned good scouting, I should say, we've had! Sound the assembly!"

Over in the woods, across the roads where the guns were parked, bugles were already ringing, and now the first battalion of the Twelfth, that had been replenishing the fires and putting on more coffee for their comrades who had marched forward without breakfast, sprang to their arms.

Colonel George Remsen, panting and puffing, stumbled through the snow to his command. The batteries were already limbering up, and the horses that had hardly finished their meal had their nose bags torn from their hungry muzzles.

Now another gun sounded, then another, and another; and each one, at its interval, followed by the explosion of the bursting shell. There began a few single, snapping reports, followed by ripple of rifle fire, then the crash of a heavy volley. The first great battle of the war was on! Another mounted man came tearing up the road waving his hand above his head.

"Where are the guns?" he shouted. "For God's sake, where are the guns?"

The guns were in motion, the heavy, lumbering wheels clucking and jolting as the horses pulled them out into the road. It was haste without disorder. Colonel Remsen, from the back of his big brown horse, gave his directions quietly. But as each piece and caisson got into the more beaten path, the horses plunged forward at a gallop. The Twelfth Infantry, that had fallen in quickly, followed in support. When they had gone about a mile and a half, at a gesture from the colonel the artillery pulled out of the road, and with great difficulty, owing to the depth of the untrodden snow, began to climb the scantily wooded slope to the south. The stillness of the air, and the

fact that the wind was slightly from the eastward, had deceived almost every one. The firing had sounded so close that they had almost expected to be into it. But now, against the dull, lead-coloured sky, above a wooded ridge, some three miles off, they saw a white ball of smoke, and then a second and a third. Behind the battery, along the meadows and the forest land, stretching miles to north and south, there was a great commotion. Sixty thousand men were standing to their arms. The advance-guard, and those that had gone forward under General McKim, numbered probably some eighteen thousand more.

To the north, twenty-five miles away, was the left wing of the great army, almost eighty thousand strong, half of which was occupying the north bank of the Ottawa. South toward the big river was the third division of nearly fifty thousand. Yet, apparently, the British had attacked the very centre of this crescent, and must have, from appearances, moved forward during the night.

There is not time or space to go into the details of this battle, where the lesson was to be learned. Only one or two phases of it can be touched upon — hardly hinted at, in fact. The great manœuvrings must be passed by. We will speak but from the standpoint of the battery and that of the troops engaged along the range of wooded

hills, the stream, and the valley beyond it. There was enough to happen in this small tract for all the space there is to spare in the telling.

The range of field-pieces and of small arms had been tremendously increased since any had been last used in the struggle between Russia and Japan. Rifles were sighted up to twenty-eight hundred yards, practically beyond the visibility of objects with the human eye; but with the telescopic sights some wonderful shooting had been done at the ranges. However, never in conflict had the new arms been tested. Delayed fuses for shrapnel could now be counted on with accuracy up to eight thousand yards. The fifteen-pounder field-pieces, with which the regular artillery were furnished, had a range of almost ten thousand yards. The gaseous discharge of the powder showed absolutely no tell-tale smoke. Black powder was still used in the shells, mixed with high explosive, in order to prove the ranges; but from the standpoint of the picturesque a modern battle had lost all interest.

When the guns had reached the crest of the hill, and with great difficulty had been wheeled into line, the big telescope, mounted on a tripod, was soon at work sweeping the ridge, where the pines rose along the sky-line, seven miles away. Almost blinded by the glare of the snow,

Colonel Remsen turned his head from the eye-piece.

"I can't make out anything," he said. "Here, Taintor, see what luck you have. Gad, but they're at it hard and fast. Now, listen!"

The reports of the English guns echoed and reverberated like the roar of a thousand heavy trains across a thousand bridges. The air over the first ridge, a mile away, was filled with scores of little bursting clouds; and all along the front the popping and snapping sounded like the burning of a great bush fire or the bubbling of a giant's caldron.

Down in the valley little dots could be seen against the snow.

"They're falling back!" some one cried.

No troops could stand that rain of shrapnel. The bubbling and roaring grew louder.

Would the batteries never open?

Looking to the westward, behind the artillery, there was a great sight to be seen. Over the meadows and through the woods was coming the main body of the centre division, brigade after brigade, regiment after regiment, pressing onward with the sound of firing in their ears. No flags, no colour. Nothing but line upon line of gray-green, moving over the white, snow-covered ground. Here and there a bugle sounded, and the shrill voices of drivers lifted where they were urging on the struggling horses.

"Lord! that's a great sight," some one exclaimed.

Just then a young man looked up from the telescope.

"I have them!" he cried. "They're not on the ridge at all, but over to the southward, near that dark patch of wood. They've left some wagon bodies on the hill crest to deceive us; but I caught the flash of a gun against the black pine trees there."

"Eight thousand, five hundred yards!" cried out the adjutant, lowering his range finder.

"Taintor, you've got the eyes of an eagle. It's a good thing you left the staff and came out where you were needed."

The order to fire was given. The first gun leaped back at its brakes and spoke. A few little black cinders scattered out before it in the snow. The shell roared and hissed and panted out over the valley toward the distant wood. Another gun followed, and another. The white smoke balls were now breaking over the pines, and there came a lull in the British firing.

"We've caught them!" cried Colonel Remsen. "We'll move them out! Phew! but the gas from that new powder smells rotten — Hullo, hullo!"

There came a whistling sound, a crescendo, scream and roar combined, then a vicious clang

almost overhead — a nasty rending, whining scream! An enemy's shell burst not two hundred yards in front of the battery's left.

"They've got us, too!" cried out the young lieutenant. "Here she comes again!"

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth when the second shell was followed by another. It whirred with a chug into a big drift and did not explode. The snow flew in a shower about the men at the nearest gun.

"There'll be hot work here soon," observed the adjutant, grimly.

As he spoke, out of a wood road, half a mile away, rode the commanding general and his staff. He paused, shaded his eyes, and then pointed back, down the road from which he had come. He gave some order hastily, and two aides galloped away. Very soon signalmen were wig-wagging orders to the approaching army. The great division paused, holding its massed ranks back, the first line being sheltered in the woods hardly more than a half-mile in the rear of the guns.

Other batteries were now pushed up, taking positions on the edge of the timber. Before the whole length of the long line of artillery had opened, there came the sound of a distant firing from the north. It was evident that the division there was engaged also. The hubbub of rifle

fire on the left died away completely. After the first few shells that had been fired, the British guns had ceased replying, and it was evident that their position being discovered, they were being moved to a safer place. Over the dark patch of woods the American shells were bursting by scores and scores.

From General McKim's position several ambulances were seen returning, the red crosses on their flags showing brilliantly against the white background. Behind them trailed a long line of little dots stumbling through the snow — slightly wounded men who still could keep afoot. A few three-pounder machine-guns were playing away from the hill above the distillery whose tall brick chimney towered above the bushes on the banks of the stream. Up to this time there had been no casualties along the ridge where the Twelfth Infantry and the artillery were posted. But without warning three shells came in from apparently a new direction; one bursting almost directly over the gun killed four men who were standing some distance behind it and wounded eight more. The white surface of the snow was spattered with crimson stains; the wounded were taken back on stretchers over the ridge, and those killed outright were covered up in the drifts, their hats being placed above them to mark their temporary graves.

For an hour or more the great artillery duel continued, and yet not a sight of the enemy was obtained. Only out of the apparently clear sky came the shrieking, death-dealing missiles. The great army waiting such a short distance away wondered when it was going to be called upon. With the excited enthusiasm of untried soldiers, men were fretting that the artillery should be "seeing all the fun."

Fun! There was no enjoyment to be found on that eastern slope where the shells were bursting. The English range was accurate. One common or percussion shell, as it descended, struck squarely in a caisson. A tremendous explosion followed. Twelve artillerymen and six of the Twelfth, that were scattered along through the underbrush, were killed outright, and many more were wounded.

How the British were faring was only guess-work. Before ten o'clock over one hundred and fifty guns were playing upon the line of distant hills, and the smoke from the exploding shells hung along their crests like a line of fog.

A cold, crisp wind began to blow from the northward, whirling the snow in little eddying drifts.

Back in the woods the men had begun to light fires to keep from freezing, and whether it was the smoke that betrayed their position or not, the British gunners increased the elevation of their

pieces that were apparently now scattered at varying intervals; their projectiles, going over the heads of the artillery, began bursting with demoralizing effect among the closely packed troops upon the western slope. A brigade of infantry, that had pushed too far forward, came out in the open in full sight, and sustained a heavy loss before it was ordered back again.

Suddenly the rifle fire broke out once more, and two batteries that had been hurried up to join McKim's brigade began firing with ten-second fuses, shortening their range by half.

"They can see something over there to fire at," cried Captain Taintor. "This sort of thing we're doing gets wearisome — Lord!" he exclaimed suddenly, "look at that! Look at that. Look!"

On the farther side of the stream, less than three miles away, the little dots could be plainly seen. In groups of ten or twelve, or five or six, and often singly, they were moving out in sight. Then a whole regiment moved up and part of another, making some effort at keeping an alignment. They progressed unevenly, without apparent order, but they were going on—on! Some were running, some staggering heavily through the snow. Other broken detachments followed them. Now it was a company, now a huddle like a mob. They plunged up the slope into the

pines and scrub-oaks, and disappeared. The bubbling commenced again, harder than ever.

The general rode back of the line of guns. A little flag with a red square in the centre began flickering nervously a message from the hill above the distillery. One of the aides read it. The general gave some orders. A bugle sounded, horses were brought from the rear, the guns limbered up. The great forward movement had begun! Down into the hollow the guns plunged, sinking almost to the hubs—the men heaving on the wheels. Ten regiments of infantry had been pushed on ahead of them, the tramping feet beat deep rutted pathways. In the road to the left the artillery formed a black, slow-moving line.

As Charley Taintor looked over his shoulder at the hill he had just left, he saw a great sight—a sight that he would never forget. Forging out of the woods were regiment after regiment; the ground was no longer white, but gray-green with the ranks of greatcoats. From the ridge, six miles away, all must have been plainly visible. The English artillery redoubled their fire. The air was filled with bursting and screaming shrapnel. Red pools in the white snow, now trodden and soggy, were everywhere. The heavy ambulances were huddled in the wood road, or floundering along the line of half-buried fence.

It looked as if the whole scene might become one of confusion. It appeared as if the advance in the open, although the enemy were six miles or more away, had been a great mistake. But it was too late. They must push on until they formed a line with McKim's division and made the shelter of the rising ground. At last they reached the stream. The infantry, panting and done, crossed on the ice or floundered through and crouched in a great mass under the shelter of the second ridge. But few of the guns succeeded in reaching the top.

Many sank in the swampy ground alongside the stream and could not be moved. Taintor's battery of the Fourth was one of the lucky ones that succeeded in pushing over, and, finding a lumber road, the tired horses and tired men got six guns to the top. Before them lay a flat, slightly depressed tableland, filled with scrub-oak and pine, and, beyond it, the higher ground along which lay the enemy. But what had become of the men of McKim's division that began the forward movement? No one thought to ask! Out in the thickets the rifle-firing was going on, and now, at long range, it swept for twelve miles or more in two parallel lines of firing. The air was filled with singing bullets — crazy, lost, whimpering musical notes. The infantry, as they pushed up to the hilltop, lay down and began emptying

their pieces at what they knew not; the fever to fire became contagious. They swept the wooded plateau with volleys and aimed haphazard across the second valley at the innocent looking hills now just within the range of the rifles. Each man seemed bent upon spending ammunition.

Back near the distillery, at the bridge that had been repaired by the engineers of General McKim's division, there was a strange sight. Order was shifted slowly out of the confusion. The guns not able to cross the stream had been extricated from the mud and soft ground. One after another they were got in line and dragged across the bridge. The men of a pontoon section, drawn up from the mass of supply wagons in the rear, were building a bridge below, working like beavers.

There was a strange smell in the air. It was permeated with the keen fumes of alcohol. The doors of the great distillery were wide open, and the little stream was choked with broken barrels. Five companies of a regular infantry regiment made a cordon about the place, standing almost elbow to elbow. Runnels of brownish red slush in some places, half frozen and frosted, like the covering of broken slices of molasses cake, were here and there. Lying about among the trees were scores of helpless men. Apparently the battle must have raged hard here in the

early morning, but only a few doctors were at work.

Colonel Chapin of the Twelfth, that had kept together, was seated beneath the pine trees on the top of the ridge a half mile away. Major Remsen was beside him. Colby a few paces away in the rear of his company was talking to one of the sergeants. The regiment was not firing. It seemed to be the volunteers alone, who were yielding to the shooting fever.

All at once some men staggered out into view from the woods in front. Some of the Twelfth raised their rifles.

"Don't fire!" cried Colby at top voice. "They are our troops! Don't fire! For God's sake, men —down! down with those pieces!"

"What the devil have they been up to?" asked Colonel Chapin, rising to his feet.

The men came staggering back. A few were hatless, some without their arms.

"Drunk, by the Powers!" ejaculated Major Remsen; "drunk as fools."

Now could be understood the sacked appearance of the distillery, and the soggy runnels and the odour at the bridge below.

The first man was within speaking distance.

"We were told they were coming, but we drove them back again," he cried; "the woods is full of them, but it's hell in there. We are all that's

left. Stop firing, for God's sake! They're shooting us!"

"Where are your officers?" inquired Colonel Chapin, seeing that the man wore corporal's stripes. "Under whose orders did you go forward?"

"Don't know, sir," the man replied, awkwardly saluting. "The men got into the whiskey down there below. Some one gave an order and they went — couldn't stop 'em. We ran into them fellows in the woods; they was coming forward thousands and thousands of them, coming forward. We've got a prisoner down here below."

"Where is he?" asked the colonel.

"Hey, you fellows, bring up that man!" shouted the corporal, waving unsteadily on his feet.

Three or four other men were walking forward and among them was a short, thick-set man in a worsted tunic and a gray blanket overcoat with red facings; his round face wore a frightened look. When he saw the colonel he saluted briskly and gave his regiment — the Sixth Royal Canadian Infantry. The story came out piecemeal.

When it was first discovered that the main force of the Americans were advancing, the English general had decided on a bold step. He had thrown forward five regiments into the woods with orders to take the ridge before them,

hold it, and stem the advance if possible; he did this, despite the fact that they would be outflanked by McKim's men on the north. Possibly, he counted on losing most of them. As they advanced through the wood, they had been met unexpectedly by the volunteers' half-mad, half-drunken onrush, that took place just after the first brigade had appeared from the woods.

It developed later that the regiments had been sent forward to hold the crest of the hill, but the first men reaching it had never stopped, and had gone forward into the thicket. The rest had followed, and a hand-to-hand encounter had taken place. If the Canadians had reached the hill crest first, it would have fared badly for the divisions that had crossed in the open. They had lost many men by the concentrated shell fire, but these losses would have been trivial in comparison to what they would have sustained under the volleys that might have been poured into them. The main advance might have been checked at the stream — if not turned back.

General McKim's division now pushed on to the northwestward; joining with the forces on the north side of the Ottawa River, they had completely turned the British right flank. The success of the centre in effecting a lodgment on the plateau, its own right being in touch with the third division on the south, rendered

the position of the brave little British army precarious indeed. They could move but in one direction toward the river to the eastward. By two o'clock they were retiring slowly, but they were forced to leave many of their guns behind them, stalled in the snow on the heights.

It was a dreadful sight the American troops saw, as in the afternoon they pushed through the woods.

The sweeping torrents of bullets seemed to have found every spot. The Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, and New York volunteers, whose mad rush had carried them too far, were found mingled with the Canadian dead. In some places they had been forced to cease their own fighting and seek protection together. Wounded survivors had awful tales to tell of the seeking, sweeping death that filled that zone of fire. The snow surface was covered with limbs of trees, twigs, and bark, lopped off and scattered by the leaden storm. After that blind, reckless fusillade began no man could stand upright. They were killed by scores as they lay burrowing in the snow.

The Canadian regiments that had so boldly pressed on had lost in killed and wounded three-fifths of their number. Of the American regiments hardly three hundred men survived unhurt. All night long the great hordes kept moving, and by daylight Montreal and the army of defence were

completely surrounded, and the city was at the mercy of the guns that lined the river banks. Only those troops had escaped who had managed to cross to the island and thence to the steamers and gunboats that had gone down the stream.

Negotiations began shortly before noon for the great surrender. Further resistance would have indeed been foolish, if not criminal. Napoleon's saying had again proved true, God was on the side of the greater armies.

After the surrender and the building of the bridges (two of the railway bridges were easily repaired) only a few of the regular regiments were allowed to enter the city. The losses in comparison to the vast numbers engaged had been small; but where bodies of troops had actually faced one another or come into contact, they had been tremendous. Both sides had learned a lesson. No body of troops whose location was absolutely known, and who were unprotected by earthworks, could live and move in range of hidden rifle fire. War had again changed its aspect so far as land-fighting went. It was more of the conduct of the game and less of the doings of the players.

Colonel Remsen summed it up in a few sentences when he said: "Know your ground, hide your position, anticipate your enemy. Move, stop, wait, and think; then move, stop, and think

again. The power is in the accuracy of the movement and the plan behind it. The strength lies in the number of men held in reserve. To move and advance in sight and within range is fatal."

Most of the captured officers were placed on parole, many were to be sent to the United States until they were exchanged. There seemed to be no bitterness expressed on the part of the surrendered army. Certainly nothing but good will was extended toward them by their captors.

But down in the States the press raised no end of jubilation. Speeches, parades, and public festivals were held everywhere. The people at large seemed to regard the war as a grand entertainment. The regiments that had so madly and recklessly gone to their destruction, were extolled as heroes who had saved the day. The accidental result of their meeting the advancing Canadians probably saved many thousands of lives. But there was little or nothing said about the one side of it, and not until later was there any mention made of the sacking of the distillery.

Before the country had settled down from its rejoicing, and the news from the front grown stale, the people at large craved something else to cheer at, the press hungered for something to sputter over. The news of the fall of Montreal and the surrender of the army set England in

a ferment. Even the placidly working Government was greatly disturbed, but there was no consternation.

The fleet in the St. Lawrence was increased. They would hold Quebec at all hazards.

CHAPTER IX

AT THE CLUB AGAIN

ABOUT the round table in the private dining room of the club on the avenue were seated Governor Landale, Marbury Thornton, Charles Rice, Admiral Howarth, Edward Norton, and old Mr. Taintor. With them was a stranger, a tall thin man with delicate features and iron-gray hair. He had a musical voice and a calm, soft way of speaking. His dark brown eyes shone and twinkled with an intelligent vivacity. Every one was listening to what the tall thin man was saying.

"But then," the latter went on, adding to something that had gone before, with a wave of his hand and a comprehensive smile, "some day all war will cease. If men wish to fight for the love of it, they can go back to clubs and slings and knives."

"What would be the matter with bows and arrows?" suggested Rice, half laughing.

"Oh, they would be useful," returned the tall man. "And that gives us an idea. — Armour might be at a premium. We might go on mak-

ing deductions for a long time. But be assured, gentlemen, what I tell you is true, war will be too expensive very soon."

"It is expensive enough as it is now," remarked Marbury Thornton. "This one has cost a pretty penny. Up to date, less than two months, it has cost almost as much as was expended in the first two years of the great Rebellion, 1861 and 1862."

"Well, most of it stays in the country this time," observed Governor Landale, "and a good percentage is going out in wages, which carries some benefit. The war is popular enough yet."

"Popular! That's just it," growled Edward Norton. "That's where all the trouble lies. It's too popular to be serious. We've got it all to learn yet. What has happened? We have spent vast sums of money, the whole country is one great camp. Every foundry and machine-shop is running full blast, — cannon and guns, cannon and guns! There's work enough at good wages for every unemployed man who hasn't on a uniform, and there are nearly three million wearing government buttons. So far so good. We have sent an army overwhelming in numbers across the frontier of a practically defenceless country. They have fought one big battle, and there are between five and six thousand men buried up there in the frozen ground. We have twenty thousand more or less unwilling guests of

the nation scattered about, and not having at all a bad time of it. Down in Chesapeake we have collected the only fleet, that can be called a fleet, that we ever had; and it's there yet — waiting. For what, it doesn't know."

"They're in very good condition, I am led to understand," put in the Admiral, "very good condition; and the new powder is considered a great success, although there have been complaints of the acrid odour."

"What do they call it, Admiral?" asked Mr. Rice. "They're making it by the ton in New Jersey and Delaware."

"Oddite," answered the Admiral, "named after Professor Oddie of Princeton, the inventor. Slow but complete combustion, and fouls the gun but little. The muzzle velocity is much increased, with a minimum increase of pressure. It was tried successfully in the field-guns at Montreal. The artillery were most enthusiastic except about the smell, and now the navy is delighted. A great invention, don't you think so, Mr. Westland?" He turned to the tall man at his elbow.

The latter smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

"They may soon forget how to make it," he said, a remark which puzzled the Admiral; but he had little time to think it over. One of the waiters came into the room with a telegram for the Governor. He opened it.

"No news," he said quietly. "The British fleet has not yet sailed, but the probable destination is given as New York. If that's so, we'll see the other side of the shield."

"Confound this whole foolish business," cried Thornton, giving way to his anger, and banging his fist down upon the table. "What good is going to come of it all? — that's what I'd like to know. Can any one tell me that? What good in the end?" he repeated.

No one answered. He threw his head back and laughed a loud, ironical guffaw.

"The chamber of commerce meets this afternoon; I wonder what they'll have to say. — How far can the heaviest guns of the English fleet throw a projectile?" he asked. "Any one know?"

"Possibly fifteen miles, — yes, a little over," the Admiral replied. "Gad, I can remember when four or five miles was a good distance. But I wouldn't fear," he went on. "They won't get into Long Island Sound, and I think Sandy Hook and Far Rockaway with the mine fields will give them a good stand-off. It will be most interesting, most interesting," he repeated, the latter part of his speech below his breath.

Then he checked himself and paled a little, for he remembered that his son was on board the *Arizona*, and that she was with the fleet now lying with steam up off Fortress Monroe.

Rice spoke up suddenly. "Forgot to tell you, Thornton," he said, "that the meeting of the chamber does not take place until to-morrow morning at ten. It was postponed from this afternoon. They hope to have Mr. Crantz there. He arrives to-night. Of course he will appear unofficially."

"It's a mighty good thing that they have him in Washington," put in the Governor. "He's the head and front of affairs altogether, and through him they kept that scandal from being published."

"About Monihan and the wholesale embezzlements you mean?" asked the Admiral. "Devil of a note all around, wasn't it? The Secretary of State on the loose in Baltimore. They say he began the spree in Washington and went away to taper off. Funny kind of a finish."

"The President accepted his resignation on the ground of a breakdown in health the next day; and a good riddance, too, it was," broke in Rice. "I don't think that we'll see men of his stripe holding any national office for some time to come. You saw Dalton's interview in *The Voice* this morning? I read it out of curiosity. Any one would have thought that it was he that threw down the gauntlet and that we were avenging his personal wrongs. Mr. Norton, it will be a peculiar history of the last few years you will be called on to write some day."

"It will require a grim humorist to take hold of the subject," replied the editor. "I hope that we may be able to smile at it, but I don't know. It is serious enough now. — I say, Mr. Westland," he added, "couldn't we go down to your laboratory this afternoon instead of this evening, as General Goddard cannot come on? You've got my curiosity so excited that I can hardly wait."

The tall man with iron-gray hair, who for some minutes had been gazing vacantly into space or the future, brought himself round to the present with an effort.

"As you say, gentlemen. It will be just as easy. If you will pardon me, I will step to the telephone and call up Dr. Norris, my assistant. We can start in about half an hour and find everything prepared."

He pushed his chair back from the table and left the room.

"What's all this about?" asked the Admiral. "I knew Westland was going to be present to-day, but I wasn't informed anything was going to take place."

"No, Admiral, you weren't here yesterday," rejoined Thornton; "but Westland asked me to meet him, and Rice and I listened to him for — how long was it, Rice?"

"I should say about three hours," replied Rice. "Took me about half an hour to get in touch, for

he began with the universe, drifted through the arts to music, and waded through swamps of scientific explanations before he came down to the stepping-stones of facts."

"Concrete facts?" asked the ex-Ambassador, with a chuckle; "what are they?"

"Well, to be simple," said Rice, "he has some experiment or other that he wishes to show us that he claims is going to revolutionize things altogether. It is the result of his long study on electrical responsiveness. He said that he had sent a long paper on the subject to Washington, but they had apparently shelved it. Too much universe and music in the preamble, I suppose."

"If he had some one to edit his scientific papers, and if he could eliminate the dreamer and the poet out of his disposition, he would never have got the sobriquet of the 'visionary Mr. Westland,'" observed Governor Landale. "Seeing the result of his experiments and witnessing the working of his inventions are very different things from hearing him talk of them."

"What's he going to do this time?" asked Admiral Howarth.

"He's going to stop the war," returned Governor Landale, with an assumption of the dramatic in his tone that proved his own incredulity.

"Well, they can't stop it too soon for us," said Mr. Norton, "and I'd give all I possess and my hopes, almost, of hereafter, if he'd stop it to-night. The loss we have sustained so far will be infinitesimal compared to that we may sustain in the next fortnight. Where the responsibility will rest is not for me to say."

"I should call it the outgrowth of an encouraged situation," replied the Governor, "or perhaps, better, the reflex of an inflated public opinion. As some one remarked on Christmas Day, 'Something had to happen,' and it certainly did. Now that we are tired of the tootings about the battle of Montreal, we want something more to toot about."

"There's a small end to every horn," observed Mr. Norton; "some people forget that, and it is very unpleasant music to listen to if you have to do your own playing. England is awfully cut up over Montreal, and small blame to her; although what under the sun an army of forty thousand could do against three hundred thousand is more than I can tell. It is a strange commentary on modern war that they should have held their front with such a small force and managed to get so many men and guns away in the boats. We will be stopped before Quebec for some time, I'm thinking."

"And by the time we're stopped, we'll be look-

ing in another direction," observed Mr. Norton; "somewhere on the coast, I take it."

"Perhaps Panama," interjected Mr. Rice.

"No, not after that foolish blunder of sinking the old *Pegasus* in the lock — that was a brilliant stroke — Hobson with Hobson out of it, and no accidental benefits. Whose idea was it, anyhow?"

"Oh, Monihan and our brilliant Secretary of War concocted that scheme with the consent of the Secretary of the Navy. Lord! but Goddard and the Bureau of Navigation were angry. The strong fortifications that we had erected at Panama, with an army of twenty-five thousand, helped by the guns landed from the dismantled *Iowa*, would have made a powerful resistance. I don't think that there was any danger of our losing the canal. Besides, the Central American States have given us an army of at least sixty thousand, such as they are, and now we have cut ourselves off from the western coast completely — not a very sensible move, all things considered. But to change the subject suddenly, didn't you say that you had received a letter from your nephew?" he asked, turning to the Ambassador.

"Yes, quite a long and interesting one," replied the old gentleman, feeling in the pocket of his coat. "I've got two nephews up there now; young Jack obtained a commission in the

Twenty-seventh New York Volunteers. Charlie said he met his brother when they entered Montreal; but, stranger still, he received the surrender of his own prospective father-in-law, Colonel Carntyne, of the artillery. He was slightly wounded by a bit of shrapnel in the shoulder and has been paroled. He is coming down here with his daughter to make us a visit. Nice fellow, Carntyne, and charming girl, Ethel. She and Charles were to have been married a couple of months ago. Of course it had to be postponed. Funny sort of a war that brings about such complications; Charlie's given quite a long account of the terrible artillery fire. He says the new guns made by the United States Steel Corporation shops behaved very well. Think of it, they turned out those guns, completed, in thirty days from the date of the order."

"And we drilled the men who were to handle them in the meantime," put in the Admiral. "I tell you, we've done a lot that we ought to be proud of. But read us your nephew's letter, sir; we would like to hear what he says."

Just as Mr. Taintor was beginning to read, Mr. Westland returned. He paused at the door.

"Gentlemen," he said, "if we adjourn this meeting to my laboratory in East Twenty-eighth Street, I believe that I can convince you that what I have said is capable of actual accomplish-

ment. Of course the whole experiment will be on a small scale. But it would require only a little time and a great deal of money to go farther with it. That's where you will have to help me. If I could get General Goddard interested, and the Government to regard me seriously, we might start to work to-morrow. But it seems they are too busy to listen; but I'll tell you this — " he lowered his voice, — " I'll make them; they will have to come to me. I'll have them knocking at the door before many weeks, mark that."

Mr. Taintor replaced the letter in his pocket, and the party rose.

" Move we adjourn," he said.

In a few minutes they were all in cabs, heading for the Wizard's laboratory that stood on the river front, a block above Bellevue. As they passed by a big foundry and machine-shop, Thornton pointed out of the window.

" There are some good-looking guns," he said. " They only started in making them here four weeks ago. I understood that they were to be ready for delivery before the middle of the month."

Ranged along the sidewalk were a score of new fifteen-pounder field-pieces, their slender barrels pointing in one direction, the paint on their heavy wheels and trails hardly dry. They looked strangely incongruous and out of place in the city

street. A crowd of children and women were standing about them.

Thornton stopped the cab.

"Where are they going?" he asked of a young artillery sergeant standing on the sidewalk.

"Somewhere to the south, sir, this afternoon," the man replied. "I believe to Virginia. Seacord's battery goes with them, sir."

The cab drove on.

"You remember Seacord, don't you, Rice?" asked Thornton. "He was chief clerk in Platt and McGee's office; had been at West Point two or three years. Most all the battery was recruited from Wall Street."

"Yes, yes; I remember the day they all enlisted, corner of Broad and Wall. Ah, here we are at Westland's."

They entered the wide hallway and ascended to the top story to the laboratory.

Inside of an hour there was no little excitement in East Twenty-eighth Street. People stood in crowds looking up at the roof of the tall brick building. Across the way in the other factory a few windows had been broken and the glass had shattered down to the sidewalk, but no one had been hurt, and in a few minutes the crowd dispersed.

At four o'clock the little party that had left the club came out. A reporter who had been sent

up to the foundry, and who had been refused admission to the tall brick building, assailed them with questions.

Had there been an accident? What had been going on? Was there any story they had to tell?

They all shook their heads. The reporter sent his card up to Mr. Westland, but was denied an audience and retired discomfited; but as Thornton and Rice rode off together in the cab that had brought them, the former turned.

"You and I will speak at the chamber of commerce meeting to-morrow," he said. "And Mr. Norton and the Admiral go on to Washington to-night — I am convinced."

"So am I," Rice responded. "It will stop all this loose, foolish talk about ransom and head off the panic. Westland is a great man. Goddard will listen to him now."

"I wonder how long we will be able to keep this thing quiet," remarked Thornton.

"Not very long," Rice replied; "it is sure to make some noise in the world."

CHAPTER X

DARKENING CLOUDS

FAST lookout vessels had steamed out from various ports along the eastern seaboard, each one fitted with wireless systems, to announce the approach of the tremendous fleet of warships that were ready to set out from Southampton waters. It was the evident intention to destroy at one fell blow, if possible, the strength of America at sea, and to wipe out in one great action her naval power. England at last meant business — with vengeance and design behind it.

The vessels of the United States had been divided into three small squadrons and one great fleet. Five warships, two of which were battleships, were off Key West, leaving two at Panama and two at Pensacola. Eight more were at New York and at the eastern entrance of Long Island Sound, four at Boston, and two fast cruisers were patrolling the Maine coast. In the harbours of Charleston and Savannah, and several other ports, were half a dozen antiquated monitors and the coast-defence vessels manned by the naval militia. But the great fleet was at the entrance to Chesa-

peake Bay at Norfolk and Fortress Monroe: seventeen battle-ships, ten of which were of the first class, and twenty-four cruisers, of which fourteen were armoured.

Although work was being pushed at the various yards in order to prepare the vessels on the stocks as soon as possible, none of those under construction could be finished in time for the action that was sure to take place within the next two weeks. One of the commerce destroyers had captured a transport out from Australia with two thousand volunteers from New South Wales, but had in turn been captured herself by a fast cruiser. Another had been sunk in the South Atlantic, and the rest were still at sea. But the English transports had been well convoyed, and so carefully had the system been maintained that little was feared from the destroyers, which were built to run and not to fight.

The Imperial merchant marine had practically ceased to exist. The life of Great Britain's great commerce was practically killed. Her flag at sea was flown almost entirely on vessels in the national service. The fleet that she was now sending out numbered over eighty; thirty-five were battle-ships of the heaviest class. Some that were rated as cruisers could almost be placed in the same category; and there were besides two great flotillas of destroyers soon to be

in American waters, one to accompany the attacking fleet, and the other destined to augment that at Halifax, which alone was almost as strong as that of the Americans at Norfolk. The entire Atlantic seaboard was now in a state of awful panic. People moved inland by thousands and thousands. The cities away from the coast were hard put to it to receive and accommodate the refugees.

Great masses of troops were hurried eastward and distributed from Passamaquoddy Bay to the Rio Grande. Every railway was hurrying on supplies and ammunition. A complete signal system had been inaugurated, and millions of dollars, invested in sunken mines, lay at the bottom of the bays and harbours.

Rumours were rife everywhere as to movements of mysterious vessels. Two or three times it had been reported that the great fleet had been sighted and was coming on. Twice it was stated that it had arrived at Bermuda, but no sure information came.

The spasm of activity had suffered a lull in the interior of the country; the novelty had worn off the marching and the music. There were rumours of the mismanagement of the camps, and complaints against the national conduct of affairs and the tremendous expenditures. A great political reaction had set in, many of the office-holders

that had been elected by the People's Party had been proved utterly worthless. Committees appointed by the citizens themselves had exceeded their authority. New men who had never been heard of, except in the lines of their business or professions, had come to the front and their worth been recognized.

A strike, inaugurated by a discomfited labour leader at one of the great steel works, had been utterly and absolutely stamped out by popular clamour. Agitation was at a discount. There was a market for brains and brawn and muscle, at its own real value, and contentions for the recognition of castes and guilds were done away with for the time.

Among a certain class there was great consternation. Men who had found themselves always supported by the voices and votes of their constituents were abandoned and thrown over. They could not gather a corporal's guard among their whilom followers.

The President, surrounded by his new Cabinet, showed his wisdom in accepting the situation; twice he had offered to resign in favour of Mr. Crantz, but he had been dissuaded. His former henchmen had fallen away from him completely, or better, under the dictation and advice of the men now at the head of the State, he had discharged them from their attendance. He had

practically become a dictator, but one in name only. As before, he had been the head of a political oligarchy, he now had become the mouthpiece, almost the servant, of another. But it was an oligarchy of brains and talents. Forced from his self-sought seclusion, a man who had twice sat in the presidential chair, and then retired to the enjoyments of private life, had joined the council, having hurried home from a shooting trip in Tibet. People who had been surprised at his absolute retirement, and then almost forgotten him because of it, now applauded his reëntrance into active life.

Congress, strange to relate, fell into line. The need of cohesiveness swept aside all party feeling. The chaos that had marked the first few weeks of the war was disappearing, but still it was plain that it would be a long time before the machinery would be in perfect working order.

In some of the big military camps, fever had appeared, in spite of the utmost precaution. At Fort Chaffee, but a short distance from Chicago, a mutiny that started in a German regiment was put down with great severity. *The Verdict*, in an editorial, took the part of the mutineers, and its offices were almost raided by a mob, for the great public were in an irritable mood. They would stand no trifling.

The Mississippi River selected this time to

overrun its banks, and the people of the great valley had other things than war to think about. There came a season of floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes, with great loss of life and property.

Relief measures had to be adopted, and aid sent to the flooded districts. The expenditures of national money were something appalling, growing up towards the billions. People began to worry over costs and taxes. The inaction galled them, for in Canada the armies were waiting for the snow to disappear before moving on Quebec.

But the great feeling of anxiety was centred upon the English fleet. The country grew almost sick with the fever of impatience. No longer news readers paid any attention to scare heads or red-lettered rumours. They waited for official bulletins, and at last from Washington came the word that the great fleet had really sailed, but under sealed orders. Its destination was apparently a secret known not even to itself. The clever spies at London sent only their opinions.

If the almost defenceless seaboard had been in consternation before, now it was in despair. A committee of influential business men and merchants in New York journeyed to Washington and sought out the President and the authorities. All business ceased in the lower portions of the city. Again there came the talk of ransom. It

was stated that negotiations had been opened through Berlin and Paris, but those best informed knew that these statements were groundless. Yet the ships had sailed — that was beyond all denying.

What England had been waiting for, now came to be understood — the arrival of the big convoyed fleets from the colonies. Thousands upon thousands of Indian troops were now quartered in Ireland. The whole of Great Britain was filled with men in uniform. Various points in the United Kingdom became great storehouses; even with her largely augmented population the crown had now enough supplies on hand to forestall any fear of famine.

The battle-ships and cruisers, released from convoy duty, were attached to the main squadrons at Spithead and Southampton. These two were joined to form the attacking fleet. The minute it had sailed the news reached Washington. The American vessels in the Chesapeake stripped for action and awaited orders.

CHAPTER XI

"MORITURI TE SALUTAMUS"

FLAG-LIEUTENANT EMERY stood on the bridge of the flagship *Arizona*, that lay farthest out of all the fleet. Gazing back up the bay, Emery thrilled at the sight. The pride and might of his country was there. The great battle-ships divided into three divisions were in parallel, equidistant lines. Grim and determined they looked in their gray-blue war-paint. They had lost all the holiday appearance of buff and white; they looked keen and wicked, with their low, clear decks, stripped of ventilators, rails, boats, and davits. There was hardly enough wood left in the superstructures out of which to whittle a toothpick.

From every towering funnel drifted a little quivering haze of oil fumes. It needed but the turning of the lever of the feed pipes to start the mighty breath of flame roaring and bellowing in the furnaces. It needed but the throwing over of the telegraph handle to start the churning of the ponderous screws, but a single low-spoken order to put in motion the great steam windlass that would gather in the fathoms of straining cable.

Up the bay, almost as far as the eye could see, through the slight, thin mist on the water, lay the lines of clean-flanked cruisers, the lean gun barrels reaching out from broadside and sponson. Emery knew them all by heart; though devoid of distinguishing mark, he could pick them out almost unerringly. He called the roll over to himself. It was like reading haphazard from an atlas; they bore the names of States, of fair towns and cities, christened according to their size and their importance. He could divide them readily into their classes at a glance. He knew them almost by instinct, as the herdsman would know the cattle in his care.

Farther inshore were a number of small dark objects, almost awash in the rip of the in-coming tide, — the little ugly water beetles that could dive and sink. Well-chosen names they bore, *Adder* and *Moccasin*, *Plunger* and *Shark*, *Narwhale* and *Garfish*, stabbers and fighters of the deep. New things they were to the job before them. Many times in the waters of the bay they had made rushing dives in practice, but never yet had any one of them been called upon to work its fell destruction. Now at last they were to have their innings. Half blinded by the swirl of the gray-green waters about them, they were to seek and sink and kill.

Perhaps in that little flotilla of fourteen might

lie more strength than in the great hulls that impatiently tugged at their moorings. The venom they held might wreak more havoc than the mighty blows of the tons of flying steel. Who knew? Every officer in command of them had been selected for his special fitness. The members of the crews were picked from volunteers. Bravely they faced the great uncertainty.

Emery fell to thinking of them. He was glad that he was going to be above the surface instead of beneath it. He did not like the idea of not being able to see with the eyes that God had given him, even if he had to see some dreadful things. There was a smothering, uncomfortable feeling that he well remembered having experienced when on a trial trip beneath the surface some weeks before. He could distinctly recall the thrumming of the machinery and the movements of the stern-faced, taciturn men who spoke no words. He remembered how upon the white surface of the directing-pad the moving picture swung like a fairy painting, reflected by the mirrors and the camera obscura, through the balanced periscope to the desk in the pilot-house, and how when they dove deeper, his temples started throbbing and it all closed out into a mad, sightless rush, directed only by the little tell-tale needle. Nerve-testing work it was in practice. What would it be with the great seas running

overhead, where the big ships snarled and fought, and the bed of the ocean fathoms below? He was glad he would be where he would hear men cheer, where he could see the steadily swinging muzzles seeking and pointing to direct their blows.

He looked with pride at the deck beneath him. What a great and mighty thing a battle-ship was! He suddenly conceived an affection for the huge and mighty fabric. He liked the bold, brave look of the guns, the sturdy strength of the huge turrets. The little truthful indicators and dials that obeyed so readily grew very dear to him.

Suddenly there came a laugh. He glanced down into the superstructure; just inside, near the entrance to the forecastle, stood a group of men — barefooted jackies with arms akimbo. A mess cook was peeling potatoes, dropping their white bodies into a tub of water; some volunteers were assisting him, squatting on their haunches; from the galley grating came the smell of cooking.

The laugh sounded again, careless and happy, and in his heart there grew a great love for these blue-shirted sailor men. He closed his eyes for a minute, for his imagination drew a picture that he did not like to dwell on: mangled forms, red stains on the clean white decks, curses and cries sounding above the roaring guns he had so often heard at target practice. He thought of the

Nebraska, of poor Edgar and Myers, and Talcot, and of the captain with his nerves and worries. He almost fancied he could feel the sickening swaying of the wounded ship, could see the green waters come bubbling and seething, sweeping inboard from the bows as she tottered before she settled down to sink. He steadied himself against the railing. He did not like to think these thoughts. Never to a living soul would he have confessed they came to him. As if to drive them out he looked for the landing-place above which the flag was flying in the bright morning sunlight that glinted through the mist. A launch was putting out, heading toward the fleet, the water spreading fanlike from the dipping stem. A signal boy who had just lowered the spy-glass spoke to him.

"The admiral is coming off, sir," he said saluting.

A whistle sounded and the hoarse voices of the boatswain's mates. The sides were manned. At the gangway the captain met the admiral. The latter spoke curtly.

"Captain Howarth, we have just received our orders. You can get up anchor, captain. Mr. Emery, signal the fleet to get under way at once. Come with me to my cabin." Then in a lower voice he added, "The English fleet has been sighted — they are heading for the capes."

The captain made no comment nor did Emery. The former simply turned to the executive officer who had overheard the order and repeated it. The executive and Emery hurried forward. A few minutes later the little flags were climbing to the signal yard-arm. The answering penants threw out their fluttering replies as each ship said, "Aye, aye!" The haze above the funnels changed to rolling clouds of dense, black smoke. The signal boys, clambering to the edge of the bridges, tossed up and down their little bits of bunting. A destroyer tore down the lines like a race-horse in the stretch. She drew up with a great whir of foam and trembling, just abeam of the flagship. Emery walked to the side. A young officer shouted to him.

"*Arizona* ahoy! Report to the admiral. The destroyers will be delayed, but will pick you up in half an hour. Only four of us are to go; the rest are to stay here. Orders have come to Washington."

Then he waved his hand.

"God bless you, Emery, old boy. Put some in for me."

Emery clasped his own palms together and shook them before his face in a salutation that meant more than any words could tell. It was as if he had sent a hand clasp to those who were left behind.

And now the admiral, followed by his fleet captain and the rest of the officers, came on deck. He trotted up the ladder to the bridge as nimbly as a boy. Emery met him.

"Have the submarines got the order?" the admiral asked shortly.

"Yes, sir."

"Give them a good long tow-line. Thank God, they are used to going under water."

Admiral Benton smiled and nodded as Emery repeated the message brought by the destroyer, but he replied nothing. In his eyes there danced a strange, excited light, but the fingers that twisted the end of his long gray mustache showed no sign of nervousness.

"The first division is to follow the flagship, and be careful to keep position — Hullo, there go the scouts!"

Coming down the centre of the channel four swift cruisers swept on, two by two abreast. The men were all on deck, and now there sounded out in a swelling chorus through the vessels that were creeping up to their anchors the clamour of the cheering. The admiral lifted his cocked hat, for he was in full uniform, as the first ship passed. The score or more of officers followed.

Aft, on the quarter-deck, the band was playing. The oft-heard national tune had a different meaning now. It mingled with the cheers and swelled above them.

"Howarth," said the admiral, quietly, "do you remember Apia Bay, when I was ensign on the *Trenton* and you a midshipman?"

"Indeed, I do, sir," the captain replied half beneath his breath.

To their mind's eyes had come another picture: the *Trenton's* men in the wind-swept shrouds; the awful, reaching seas, rearing and tumbling toward the palm-lined beach, the stranded vessels just astern, with the surf beating the life out of them, and under the *Trenton's* quarter, steaming out to sea, the brave little *Calliope*, the Union jack torn to shreds at her spanker, and the band on the gusty, storm-swept deck playing that common tune that rang in one accord, "God save the Queen"—"America." They remembered how the men had cheered,—the same sweeping roar of voices in the slow, cadenced time. Torn by the shrieking winds, those cheers had mingled. And now they were going out to fight those very men whose voices chimed with theirs that day. The pity of it all! No hatred filled their breasts. No rivalry stimulated them, only the word had come, and duty was the oriflamb.—They were to follow where that duty led; the teachings of tradition made rules for the life of every day.

The hawsers attached to the submarines tautened as the battle-ships gained headway. The

land slid by. On the ramparts of the ripraps were grouped the masses of blue-coated soldiery.

The two big sixteen-inch guns pointing skyward just showed above their steel-clad wall. On the low-lying batteries on the mainland to the left were crowds with fluttering flags. Women and children were there in hundreds. From the roofs of the great hotels rippled the grand old colours, and like a pageant, for the pleasure of the multitude, the fleet swept past. The speed cones raised and lowered until, like a well-rehearsed figure of a march, ship after ship secured her allotted distance, and all were moving on. It was the procession into the wide arena, — *Morituri salutamus.*

An hour, and the foremost was but a speck, the last an indistinct blotch in the reek of the blue-black smoke. As the pace increased, the clouds of oil fumes almost disappeared, only the trail was left behind, and the odour of the great departure reached the shore. In a few minutes four destroyers tore down the channel, their low freeboards almost hidden in the swash of their great bow waves.

In the west a glorious sunset tinged the sky, the red sun lowered, round and distinct, and all the horizon seemed to flare its dying colours up against the clouds. They seemed to drip in ruddy points of colour. The sun sank lower, until

it dipped below the hills. There was no softening shade; a broad, low streak gashed against the blue gray of the sky — a smear of sanguine hue.

The night came down. Up to twelve o'clock the Ardois signals winked and twinkled orders from the flagship that held the lead of the middle division, but after midnight not a flash nor a signal was given. Only the side and steering lights glowed faintly; and with their noses close against the trailing guides, each vessel kept her place. At three o'clock general quarters sounded and all hands were called; hammocks were stowed about the superstructures.

Hour after hour they steamed on, and then, just before daybreak, there came a pulsating, quivering glow at the *Arizona's* maintop. The annunciator had made a record in the chart room, and every watch officer of the fleet had read the result. The wireless flashed a message: "The enemy are eighty miles away, heading slowly west by south, straight for us. Observe orders given yesterday."

Only a few of the blue-jackets slept after three that morning, and they at their stations by the guns. A sibilant whispering pervaded every ship. A little midshipman on the *Arizona*, coming from his bunk, ran into an officer in the dimly lighted passage. He dropped something on the deck.

"What are you doing here?" the lieutenant thundered. "Where do you belong, sir?"

"Fourth division, after five-inch gun, sir."

"Get there quickly."

"Aye, aye, sir."

He picked up the object he had dropped and stowed it in his tunic. It was a photograph of a little girl, her hair looped with a big black ribbon at the nape of her slender neck.

The light was broadening in the east. Emery was still on the bridge. The officers not on watch had, some of them, rested on the deck in their greatcoats, but Emery had not closed his eyes. There was no rest for him. A feverish, wide-awake sensation pervaded every fibre. He longed for eyes that could see out in the darkness; he almost envied the sensitiveness of the needle in the conning-tower, for the soul of the ship had been transferred from the commodious, and now dismantled, pilot-house to the confines of the restricted space inside of the great steel wall.

Mile after mile, more certainly and distinctly, the recorder showed the position of the enemy. To a dot it was pricked down on the chart. Yet, when the dawn came, there was nothing but the wide sweep of the clear horizon.

To the northward, two miles away, was the second line of ships, and to the south, at the same distance, was the third. In each division the flagships of the rear admirals, twin sisters of

the *Arizona*, and four of the larger cruisers were provided with the wireless systems. Messages passed and repassed, and in obedience to an order the vessels spread out fanwise, moving forward in a crescent. Four battle-ships and five cruisers, with two of the destroyers, dropped back at the centre to form a reserve. A submarine was cast loose and, bobbing and dipping almost out of sight, drifted back to join them.

CHAPTER XII

THE OPENING OF THE BATTLE

AFTER a hearty breakfast on board the *Arizona*, despite regulations, a tot of rum was served to each member of the crew, out of the medical stores. The men went to their stations in great good humour. Only a few at first seemed to recognize that the day had any particular significance, that it would be different from any other day. But as the minutes sped, their carelessness wore off. The suspense began to tell.

The fleet swung on leisurely, towing the submarines astern. Like a captive school of great porpoises, they plunged along, their steel backs just awash. At nine o'clock an important message came trembling over the wires into the electrician's room below in the 'tween decks of the *Arizona*. The enemy had been sighted. Their numbers noted and recorded. They covered a line half again the extent of the Americans', so the intervals were widened and on the fleet went as heretofore. At 9.30 Captain Howarth, who was standing next to Emery, just out-

side the curving entrance to the conning-tower, raised his hand.

"Hark!" he said. "Did you hear that?"

Faint, but distinct, a jarring report had come to them — one single shot. An instant later, from the fighting top, there came a hail.

"Bridge, there! Four vessels in sight, heading in from the eastward."

"The scouts," said Captain Howarth, shortly. "We got word that they had turned an hour ago. We'll soon be in it; and we'll keep the flag flying, the old way, God help us all."

"That we will, sir," the flag-lieutenant answered.

Throughout the ship the whispering had ceased. The bugles rang and a rigid inspection followed. On the *Arizona* the admiral in person made a hurried visit to every part of the ship. The words he addressed to the oilers and water tenders, to firemen and coal-passers, to the machinists and the members of the powder division below the water-line, out of reach of the hurtling, clanging death storm, were the same that he addressed to the expectant men standing about the guns; they were short, pithy words that carried meaning.

"My lads, in less than an hour we will be fighting. Every man who does his duty, helps. I trust you to do yours."

By the time he reached the deck the scouts were well within hailing distance. Slowly cir-

cling, they turned in the same direction as the fleet that was now proceeding under reduced speed. Two were ordered back to the reserve and two joined the centre division. The old *Colorado*, that still held her reputation as one of the fastest cruisers in the navy, fell in beside the flagship, and for some time they talked together through the megaphones. Her captain had little more to tell than what he had sent through the air almost two hours before. There was one important bit of news, however, the English fleet was preceded by a small flotilla of submarines, which accounted for the slowness with which they were advancing.

Twelve of the American diving craft were now cast off, the *Arizona* still keeping hers, the *Adder*, in tow. The speed of the fleet was still further reduced to about steerageway, and with the submarines in front, their presence only shown by the tops of their periscopes and by about ten feet of standpipe, the great line moved on.

Black specks and dots appeared along the horizon, over which hung a dark gray haze. The executive officer who with the others, including the admiral, still stood upon the bridge, spoke with his glasses at his eyes.

"They are burning Russian oil," he said. "No, by gad, some of them are burning coal."

A young ensign who was quivering with excite-

ment as well as with cold, for the slight wind blowing free from the westward was keen and nipping, spoke to the fleet captain.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, "but there's a white vessel just in sight, about two miles astern of the reserve line. She's flying a flag I can't make out."

The lad's voice was dry and cracked almost into a treble as he spoke. The fleet captain, Commander Winston, swept his glass round and found the stranger at last.

"Well, what do you think of that?", he cried. "A press boat, by the horn spoon. I know her, she's Abbott's old yacht, the *Icasta*, one of the fastest ever built. So we are going to have spectators, eh?"

Captain Howarth, who had been talking to the admiral, turned to the executive.

"Mr. Keene," he said almost softly, "you can hoist the battle-flags."

To every signal yard-arm and to the trucks lifted little rolls of bunting. An instant later the flagship was ablaze with colour. The stars and stripes fluttered out into the air, and the wind, increasing somewhat, tossed them straight ahead, so that their rippling folds seemed beckoning on, pointing the way. Every vessel of the fleet followed the *Arizona's* example. In the clear, bright sunlight the sight was magnificent, and

never shall they forget it who lived to recall it to their memories! The fighting tops of the British vessels were now above the horizon. They, too, broke out their battle-flags. To the southward a few long, black hulls could just be seen. Still the fleets were ten miles apart, and though within long range, no shot had yet been fired. A young officer with a range-finder in his hand shouted down from the military top:—

"They are changing direction, sir; heading in line to the southward."

Admiral Benton turned to the flag-lieutenant and gave him orders to signal all vessels to port their helms and form in one long line, parallel with the enemy. A few minutes later both fleets were proceeding in the same direction, the English line extending beyond that of the American almost four miles. Their intervals were much shorter, their order perfect.

The admiral and the five officers with him had not yet left the bridge to go to the conning-tower. To tell the truth, if it had been possible, he would have preferred to have stayed out in the open. His face was a study: his lips were parted beneath the grizzled fringe of his heavy mustache, and under the embroidered peak of his cap his eyes had changed from their usual light blue to a steely gray. He was counting the seconds over in his mind, the momentous flying seconds that would

elapse before he gave the order to fire. The heavy balanced turrets had swung about, and the four great guns, forward and aft, were trained athwartship. Yet it was all dead silence, so silent, indeed, that the footsteps of one of the surgeons who had stayed on deck until the last minute could be heard distinctly as he hurried across the deck and trotted down the ladder to where his gleaming knives lay out in order on the clean unused operating-table.

All at once an excited voice came from the top:

"There are the English submarines, about a mile outside the line of ours! Broad off our beam, sir — God, sir, they've dived!"

The admiral jumped to the railing. There was no thought of the conning-tower now in his mind, the danger was not in the open air. A force equal to fifty ships was speeding toward the gallant line covered with its flaunting bunting. The men down below in the superstructure had heard the ominous warning; swiftly it passed from lip to lip, "The submarines are coming, the submarines are coming!" The suspense was awful!

Suddenly from the leading vessel of the American fleet there came a clanging explosion. The *Washington*, seventeen thousand tons, — five hundred tons larger than the *Arizona*, and the second largest ship, — had opened the ball.

A man at one of the six-inch guns almost immediately below the bridge suddenly dropped on all

fours; he sprang up and down in the air, his head thrown back, his mouth working, making inarticulate sounds. He leaped to one side and the other, like a frog, clacking and croaking — a horrid sight.

"Lay hold of that man there," called a stern voice from below, "lay hold of him, two of you men — catch him, can't you?"

The man rose on his haunches with his fingers drawn back like claws. He snapped with his teeth at the men who reached for him.

"Take care, he'll bite you!" some one cried. "Have a care!"

Two or three others had now rushed forward and pinned the fellow to the deck. Struggling and gurgling, stark, staring mad from fright, he was carried down below.

The little incident that had only taken ten seconds' time had not caused the admiral or Captain Howarth more than to glance aside. Their eyes were on the open sweep of rolling water, where an instant before standing up, like the poles of distant shad nets on the shallows, had been the standpipes of the American submarines.

Their instruments must have warned them of the enemy's near approach.

There was nothing to be seen, — they, too, had plunged, — nothing to be seen now but a solitary white-winged gull following the undulations of the smooth round billows that came rolling on

from the eastward, their tops broken here and there by scattered whitecaps.

"God, what was that?"

The surface of the sea a mile away was rent and torn into a heap of white and gray. There was an instant flare of flame, visible even in the bright light of the sun, that shot up from the water. Not a single explosion, but a roar like the thrilling flam of a giant drum — a sudden throbbing, like the burst of a titanic machine-gun. For a half-mile in length the water rose in a wall of great smothering spouts, a hundred feet in height. The crash of their falling was like thunder, and where the smooth-running seas had been, was now a tumbling vortex from which combing waves ran out in following circles. It seemed as if the waters had been smitten by the same rod that had opened them for the Israelites and closed them down upon the Egyptians.

No one could speak. The admiral raised his forearm across his eyes as if to hide the impression of the sight. Captain Howarth staggered and bent forward with a groan. A voice from below spoke again, in awe-struck accents this time: —

"My God in heaven, what was that?"

Aye, what was it?

Those who had seen it guessed and knew. The submarines, huddled almost in close contact, had

come together. The explosion of one had ripped out all the rest. It had been the unexpected counter-mining of a mid-ocean mine field. Emery, pale and panting for breath, remembered something he had once seen in a Western river — a dynamite cartridge exploded in a pool, and the poor dead fish floating up, some almost broken open by the force of the explosion. Who could have foretold this happening? Had those brave, silent men, whose work we had not envied, known this? Had the inventor, over his drawing-board, been warned of such possibility? There was no time to think. The fact was proved. One experiment in modern warfare needed no further trial.

The ships were rocking now in the rip of the waves caused by the awful doing out there in the water. They swayed and rose and fell as the close following waves struck them.

The admiral turned.

"Signal the fleet to keep their distance — half-speed ahead," he said quietly, but his face had gone white as the glove on the hand that trembled as he pulled at his gray mustache.

The *Washington*, that had not fired again, swung in a little closer to the black line of the English fleet, but not one gun was fired at her. Both sides seemed paralyzed, shocked, half dismayed into forgetfulness of action. Then, with a great crash, the Englishman broad off the

beam of the *Washington* opened. Black specks whirled in the air from the grand old battleship's decks. She almost staggered under the blows that reached her, for the lines were now not more than six miles apart and nearing every instant.

If any one had told naval experts that they could have approached that near without losing ships on both sides, he would have been laughed at. At the centre and northward sweep of the trailing vessels they were hid from one another by a grayish green haze that hung low upon the water and drifted down toward the British fleet —the fumes from the tons of powerful explosives that had come from the submarines. It was a repulsive-looking cloud that hung compactly together, rolling, weaving, and eddying over the surface.

Suddenly a shrieking, whirring shell came out of somewhere, and with the noise of a freight train rattling across a trestle, passed overhead just clear of the *Arizona's* flying bridge and tore westward. From the British funnels rose black clouds as they started full blast the oil spray in the furnace.

"Howarth," said Admiral Benton, "to the conning-tower with us! God, I don't know about asking any men to stay in those fighting tops, but I suppose they must take their chances for a while longer— Commence firing with the

port battery at those two ships just ahead of that line of smoke; they'll soon be well out of it."

A bugle rang. The bridge beneath their feet, as they started for the ladder, leaped and trembled. Emery saw the projectile plainly as it soared out in its flight. He paused a second to watch, then —

"Good shot," he cried, "straight into her!"

The young lad in the top screamed out shrilly, repeating the words as if in joy: —

"Hurray, good shot! That's the — "

The rest of what he said was drowned in the great roar of the forward guns. Both fleets, increasing their rate of speed, were now in action. No second's space of silence could be counted between the heavy detonations. The reserve line had dropped farther back to the westward; but even they had begun firing, and their shots at long range hurtled hundreds of feet high over the heads of the fighting American line. Emery had reached the conning-tower, and it was well he did so. There was scarcely any bridge left where he had stood. A shell, striking on the top of the superstructure and glancing upward, caught the forward funnel square in the centre and exploded, scattering its fragments, cutting and slashing in all directions. Two of the stanchions to the bridge had been cleaved as if with a giant's cold chisel, the

structure sagged at its centre where the gratings were splintered and broken.

There was a pungent, acrid odour throughout all the ship. Down the ladders, to where the doctors waited, bleeding forms were being carried. The white decks and even the walls of the citadel were spattered with red drops.

The admiral, who had his eye to one of the slits in the great metal wall, as Emery entered, suddenly staggered. Emery and Captain Howarth and Commander Keene, the fleet captain, and the navigator fell forward, the latter to his knees. Instinctively they had all raised their hands and clasped their temples. The quartermaster and the ensign at the wheel alone remained erect, clinging to the spokes. The flag-lieutenant remembered how, once, when skating, he had been hit a sudden and unexpected blow with a hockey stick that had stretched him on the ice. The blow had made a sound — a sickening, sudden snapping in his brain. Just now he had experienced that same splitting, sickening noise, as if his skull had cracked. He felt gone in the pit of his stomach. The admiral turned his blood-shot eyes upon the others, his lips moved, and he formed some words, but not a sound could the flag-lieutenant hear. There was a bulge in the port side of the conning-tower, like a great blister about to break. The admiral

pointed at it. Emery touched it with his hands. It was so hot that it burned his fingers. Fair and square the conning-tower had been struck by a thirteen-inch armour-piercing shell. Three minutes later it was hit a glancing shot, and then twice more by heavy shells. The admiral stumbled over to one of the telephones. He shouted something into the mouthpiece and then, his face strained and white, waited for a reply. Emery crossed over to him. The admiral grasped him by the shoulders.

"My God," he cried, "are we all deaf? Can you hear what I say?"

"I can, sir," the flag-lieutenant shouted back, nodding.

"What? Speak loud! Oh, Lord! my hearing's gone!"

A thin little trickle of blood ran from the admiral's nostrils.

"I want to call up the central station and speak to the electrician and operator," roared the admiral.

Captain Howarth stepped to the instrument.

"I can't hear anything," he groaned. "Here, Emery, try. Quick, man!"

The lieutenant bent over the earpiece and listened. Although his hearing had somewhat returned to him, he could make out no words of the voice that apparently was shouting at the farther end.

"There's something wrong," he said. "I'll try the tubes." He raised the little brass lid and listened. There was a hissing, whistling sound plainly audible.

"The tube is broken," he cried. "There's steam escaping somewhere, I could swear."

"I want to send a message to Rear-Admiral Bates," cried Admiral Benton. "I want to signal him by wireless to close up nearer. I intend to try to break through the British lines. We'll all be sunk out here — they've four guns to our one. The electric semaphores are shot away."

Every now and then could be felt the shock of some big projectile against the *Arizona's* sides or superstructure. She had been recognized, it was evident, for the flagship, and at her was being poured the concentrated fire of three first-class battle-ships and a cruiser. It was only a question of time when she might be put out of action. Her top sides were riddled through and through, from her funnels smoke was pouring; for the oil, owing to some accident to the blowers or burners, did not work well. How long she could stand it, no one knew.

The flag-lieutenant grasped the admiral's arm.

"I'll go and reach them — I'll signal them," he shouted. "Write me the message, sir."

He held out a note-book and pencil. The admiral understood his intention.

"No, no," he cried, "you must not!"

Emery smiled back into his blood-shot eyes and extended the note-book and pencil once more. The admiral took it and wrote something hastily.

Bareheaded, Emery stepped back and darted through the entrance of the conning-tower. He dodged past the rear shield and had a step or two to take before he could get behind the protecting wall of the citadel.

Curiosity will tempt men to do many things. It tempted him that day to stand a second there in the open where everything was visible. All was clear and bright. The oddite fumes, blown back from the guns, stung his throat and nostrils, and started him coughing violently. But he could see what was happening — everything!

Just a short distance ahead, within four hundred yards, was the *Tennessee;* but he would hardly have recognized her now. Both military masts were gone at the height of her smoke-stacks, and one of the latter was shorn off at least a dozen feet. She was as full of holes as a tin can tossed in the air might be from a charge of bird-shot. Yet her guns were hard at work. The English line was firing much slower than the American. Across the space between the vessels, Emery could see the shots crossing back and forth; the larger ones groaned and rumbled as they came and went in the game of pitch and toss. The

guns of lighter caliber were keeping up a steady, streaming fire that screamed in high treble. Perhaps the most awful thing in the whole picture was its very clearness. Through the slits, or peep-holes, of the conning-tower one got little impression of the openness, the wideness of the view. Often, in target practice, Emery had noticed that the concussion of the forward guns started the palpitation of the air in such fashion that any one looking out from the tower could scarcely maintain a steady gaze. It was as if handfuls of sand were being hurled against the face at every discharge of the great guns. The concussion accounted for the admiral's blood-shot eyes.

"Poor, brave old chap," thought Emery, as he jumped inside the superstructure.

He paused in absolute dismay. Only the two forward five-inch guns were in action. About the farthest gun lay almost the entire crew. The gun mount itself had been destroyed and the breach rested on the deck. In the short space of the few minutes — for since the action had begun it was but little over a quarter of an hour — greater havoc had been wrought than Emery had deemed possible. Both signal yard-arms were gone. The *Arizona's* foremast was broken off about ten feet above the fighting top. In the quick glance he cast about him he took in a great

deal. He recognized in one of the dead bodies poor little Jack Peyton — the girl with the slender throat would get no more letters from her middy lover. A gun captain, McIntyre, one of the oldest men on board the ship, lay stretched there, and Marky, a sturdy sailor, who had been in the service twenty years — a fine seaman afloat, but an awful drunkard and roisterer ashore. Poor Gilmore, too, had gone on his last spree. There would be no more liberty denied him; he was free forever.

During the few seconds it took him to reach the main-hatch, three shots had struck the ship and at least a dozen had gone over her. Those that had hit were on the armour belt, and had exploded harmlessly outside. He ran to the ladder and almost jumped down to the deck below. There he caught his breath. The air was stifling with the picric acid fumes — blood stains were everywhere. A trail of red led to the coaming of the hatch; but every eight-inch gun was in action, and a procession of men were wheeling the fixed ammunition from the ammunition hoist. Just before he went down below to the splinter deck, where was the central office and the electrician's room, the men burst out cheering.

A lieutenant, grimy and blood-spattered, seeing him, shouted: —

"Hullo, Emery. By gad, we've put one of them

out of action! How goes it up above? Lord, they've had to turn the hose on the men in the fire-room to keep them at their work. Poor old 'Turtle' is killed."

Emery did not have time to reply. The message on the bit of crumpled paper burned in his hand; he had almost forgotten it and must hasten. At last he reached the place he sought. An electric light blazed brightly in the confined space that was filled with switchboards, wires, and instruments. Quickly he read the admiral's message, shouting it at top voice, for his numbed ears yet could place no value on the strength of sound.

Down the face of the chief electrician sweat was pouring. His face was drawn with vexation and worry.

"Damn it, man," he replied, "I can send no message; our wires are burnt out. I told them not to monkey with that new-fangled obliterator on the *Tennessee;* but I suppose she tried it on, and this is the result. I can get no response from anybody over the wires. The whole thing is gone to hell."

He babbled on like a foolish, profane boy.

"I tried to ring up the conning-tower a dozen times to tell you what has happened. I suppose you are too busy out there to pay any attention," he added in a tone of useless complaint. "I can't

send a message; if the old man thinks he can, let him come down and try it. Look here!"

He swung down a handle from a switchboard and turned a key around a numbered dial, holding it a second here and there in different places.

"If everything was O K, they'd get that," he said. "But look —" he pointed to a needle beneath a glass at his elbow. It only quivered sideways from the tremor of the ship. "No answer — I tell you the whole thing is gone to hell," he cried. "What the —"

Emery did not stop to hear more. He rushed to the foot of the ladder and was bounding up two steps at a time. There was one way the admiral's message could be sent. When he reached the main deck he met the officer who had spoken to him before.

"For God's sake, where is there a signal-flag?" he asked hoarsely.

The officer shook his head. Then Emery remembered that as he had crossed the deck above he had seen one lying in the gangway. He shook himself free from the lieutenant's detaining grasp, and choking and sputtering from the reek of powder gas, he stepped out into the open, with the sky above. There lay the flag, just under the ruins of the flying bridge. He picked it up and ran up the ladder to the after bridge. The six-pounder guns here were

all deserted. Amid a pile of tossed and bloody hammocks lay the bodies of four or five marines. The brave fellows had fought there practically unprotected until almost every one had been killed or wounded.

As Emery came up to the open space, he could see all about him. Something had happened to the battle-ship just astern, the *Utah;* she was yawing badly, and was well down by the head. The water rippled and plashed over the bow and forecastle, up to the forward turret, about the base of which they swirled and foamed. Her great screws were turning a third out of water. Her forward compartments must have filled entirely to bring her so far down, yet she was endeavouring to hold her place in the line, and all of her guns were going. There were some men working out on the deck, sheltering themselves, as they stood waist deep in the water, under the lee of the forward turret, from the hail of shot. Everywhere the water was jutting and spouting where the missiles struck. A twelve-inch projectile smashed the top of a wave just astern of the *Arizona*, and leaped upward like a rubber-ball from the surface of a tennis-court, tearing the quivering air into wild roars of anger. Emery tossed the flag above his head and began to wigwag furiously, signalling the admiral's order for the ships to starboard their helms

and make for the British line, bows on. Well did he know that it was the forlorn hope, — the charge of the desperate, the last resort, a Balaklava of the sea; for the long line could not survive the concentrated fire of their numerical superiors.

Not a bit of tossing bunting replied to him. At last he saw that one of the men out on the deck had seen him and had caught the message. He signalled a reply with his cap: —

"All right. Orders received; will pass them on."

The man scrambled up, past the edge of the turret into the superstructure. As Emery was about to descend the ladder, he noticed the steel hawser that led astern to the *Adder* was taut as a bowstring. The submarine was still in tow, although her captain had kept her well beneath the surface.

CHAPTER XIII

THE THICK OF THE FIGHTING

EMERY wondered if those on board of the *Adder* had seen the fate of their companions; if they knew what had happened in the awful prologue to the present tragedy. Perhaps a shot had found her; the thought occurred to him that she might now be filled with drowned, imprisoned bodies. Suddenly the submarine broached to the surface like a whale coming up to blow. She came almost clear of the water; her ugly-looking snout poked out through the hollow of a wave, and to his astonishment, although she was running quite awash, the lid of the little conning-tower was raised, and the figure of a man, that almost filled the circular opening, appeared. The spray dashed into his face; there he crouched like an Eskimo seated in a gigantic steel kyak. He saw Emery all at once and waved his hand, shouting something which the flag-lieutenant could not catch through the uproar.

Why Emery did what he did, he could not have told at that instant, but he rushed to the broken rail, and flourished the flag again.

"Cast off, at once," he wigwagged, "and attack."

The towing hawser was made fast to a patent ring clutch in the bow. He saw the officer — for now he recognized him — reach to one side and pull at a line that led forward to the tripping bolt, but it would not give. He hauled and strained; then quietly he disappeared, closing the round hatch after him like a spider lowering the lid to his nest. The little vessel swayed and rolled like a log in a river rapid. Emery could not leave. He forgot his danger in his excited interest. Then for an instant he looked astern and could see that the *Utah* was slowly swinging, going deep as she met the seas; and now for the first time he perceived what the men on deck were busy doing. They were trying to put the outside shields over the ports of the lower turret guns to prevent the inrush of water. He noticed that lashings had been rigged from the eight-inch turret above.

How he loved those men who any instant might be washed away or ground to pieces by one of the flying shells! He saw them fit the shields and commence turning in the handscrews that held them battened firmly against the projecting chases. Providence seemed to watch over them, for the shots from the British guns just then were high. He turned his eyes from near-by objects and looked out toward the enemy's line.

Far astern drifted two big cruisers; the wind had subsided to almost a dead calm, and the smoke from their funnels rose straight as if from factory chimneys. They were close together and turned, almost touching, bows on; it appeared as if they might soon come into collision. Back of them, almost enshrouding them, lay the low, greenish cloud that did not seem to have dissipated in the air. Heading toward them from the eastward, racing and tearing through the seas, was a low, dark object. Emery's heart rose in his throat; at a glance he saw that it was one of the American destroyers. The British flags were still flying, hanging limp and almost still, but the guns were not firing upon the destroyer. What could it mean?

Turning to the British line again, he saw that three of their ships had turned about and were making northward to the relief of the two evidently distressed vessels. But now there was something else for him to watch — something that more closely concerned him — the *Utah* had broken out a little string of flags from her signal yard-arm.

Emery could have cheered as he read the magic number. The admiral's orders would reach the fleet. He must report at once. But before he turned to go, he looked again at the submarine only two hundred yards astern. There was a fig-

ure at the bow — bareheaded, soaked, battered, and almost swept away at times, lying at full length, holding on with legs and arms, like a man riding a bucking horse. Emery could see him working with a wrench, hammering and screwing at the bolt.

An instant later, the steel hawser slacked away and, like a spent fish released from the hook, the submarine wallowed and swayed in the flagship's wake. The brave fellow forward almost lost his hold — twice he was compelled to haul himself on board by sheer strength of arm, for the seas washed over him, hiding him completely, while the plunging little craft reeled and swung like a crazy thing. Not daring to stand erect, the man crept slowly aft. The lid was raised again, and in he crawled head foremost. The cover shut almost upon his heels. In an instant the *Adder* turned and, sinking slowly until nothing but the standpipe showed, wriggled off to the eastward.

Emery ran forward across the deck. As he came to the place where he would have to make the jump to the entrance of the conning-tower, his foot struck something. It was a range-finder, broken and twisted. He looked up at the fighting top. Over the edge hung a limp arm and open hand. He shut his eyes hard for a moment, and made a rush for the conning-tower. He found the admiral standing, half leaning on Cap-

tain Howarth's shoulder. His face showed the awful strain.

"The signal has been flown from the *Utah*, sir. The fleet must have it now. I ordered the *Adder* to cast off and attack, sir."

"Well done!" cried the fleet captain as his glance fell on Emery. "The ships are turning, see!"

He pointed to one of the slits out of which the executive was looking. Emery stepped to the next one. Almost all of the vessels were putting their bows to the eastward. It was the final effort, brave indeed, but it seemed as hopeless and as unpromising as the charge of the Light Brigade. Some of the ships could hardly manage to swing, and to his horror the flag-lieutenant saw that there were wide gaps in the broken line.

He closed his eyes and, shuddering, turned away. Just then he had seen one of the armoured cruisers sway to one side and slowly settle, going down, down, until the colours at her masthead flapped on the surface once or twice in a forlorn farewell before they disappeared.

If the thundering uproar had been fierce before, now it was redoubled. Again and again the flagship staggered and trembled. Three shots struck fair and square against the eight-inch turret, two burst against the heavy armour of

the one beneath. Through the wide rents in the topgallant-forecastle the waters were rushing in and out as the bow sank or lifted. Emery could see almost to the armoured deck beneath. Objects of all kinds were being washed up from below. The *Arizona* had settled two feet at her water-line; but her engines kept on going steadily, and beneath her armoured skin she was as tight as a tea-kettle. The connection with the engine room was still intact, only one steampipe had broken and that was now soft-patched and mended. Her guns were busy from all her turrets and from her broadside port battery. The starboard battery had not yet come into play.

The British fleet had turned to meet the onslaught with a countercharge. Directly ahead of the *Arizona* was coming a huge towering mass of steel flying two rows of signals. Emery knew her — the flagship *Polyphemus* — the greatest battle craft afloat. The vessels were headed straight on. Their bows aimed at one another. It would not be long before the cruel tusks would be tearing each other's sides. "Prepare to ram," rang through the flagship. Down in the torpedo room the whiteheads were in the tubes. Men threw themselves prone on the decks — some groaned, some prayed. Which would get it full and fair? Could either dodge the impact

and escape without a deadly wound? The flag-lieutenant saw the red flame leap from the Britisher's huge bow guns; and not two feet above the *Arizona's* conning-tower both great projectiles sped, crashing through the wreck of the pilot-house, tearing out on their journey with the miles and miles before them. He turned to look at the admiral. The latter had recovered somewhat, but still with his hand upon Captain Howarth's shoulder was standing near the speaking-tube to the engine room. At the same instant two torpedoes broached harmlessly like porpoises to port and starboard. The *Arizona's* missiles, too, went wide by less than a dozen feet.

"Give her every turn she's got," the captain cried hoarsely to the engineer, and lurched over to one of the peep-holes. "Tell them to be ready in the engine room to reverse the starboard engine, hard and sharp. Stand by there, quartermaster — be quick with the helm when I give the word."

The quartermaster, a young fellow under thirty, with high cheek-bones, — the stern-jawed, gaunt-featured type of the coast fisherman, — gave a quick grunt, followed by an awful oath, that sounded sudden and horrid like the breaking of a bone.

There had come a pulsating, booming crash, like the bursting of a dam.

"Full speed astern!"

It was Captain Howarth's voice following the quartermaster's involuntary oath with this sudden shouted order. Emery jumped to the port telegraph. The ensign caught the other; they jammed the handles over and pulled them back together.

"Full speed astern, sir!"

Emery pressed the button that clanged the bell in the engine room. For all she's got now!—for every pound of steam and every inch of straining steel! He had seen, only a second later, the same sight that had caught the quartermaster's eye. So had the ensign seen it, so had they all of them.

"The *Adder!*" the ensign fairly screamed. "The *Adder* struck her!"

The ship was throbbing and trembling convulsively, but still forging on. Admiral Benton turned to the captain.

"We'll be on top of her!" he cried. "We cannot help it! She's swinging into us!"

"No, no!" exclaimed Captain Howarth, "she's sinking fast. Starboard, hard a-starboard!"

The quartermaster whirled the spokes; the helm indicator swung the full quadrant.

The first thing Emery knew he was standing outside the tower, where he had stood before; how he got there he could not have told. The others followed him. Directly ahead, less than

five hundred yards away, like a whale in its last flurry, lay the pride of the British navy. Her great screws were whirling almost clear of the water, thundering their mighty flukes, beating and tearing the waters into a great foaming, spreading lather, tossing up white clouds of leaping spume and spray. Forward she was down to the top of her turret, her bridge on the port side, dipped deep in the water. Men were jumping out of her like hornets out of a crushed nest; a rush of steam roared from her after ports.

Despite her quickly reduced speed, the *Arizona* was gliding toward the shattered, massive wreck; even with her helm over, it looked as if a collision could not be averted, when suddenly like a sinking bottle, filling to the last gurgle, the *Polyphemus* settled swiftly, her decks burst with a mighty roar, the lapping waters closing above them with an ingulfing crash, clopping together, hurtling and leaping in a seething, tossing smother. She had three fighting tops on every mast — one after another they disappeared. It was uncanny, horrid, and unreal — that swift and steady submergence.

The fore truck, with the flags still flying faded out of sight when so near that it could almost have been reached with the toss of a hand-line. The *Arizona* came to a rest in the midst of the bubbling, heaving waters, on the spot where the great battle-ship had sunk.

"God, that was awful, Howarth!" exclaimed the admiral, in an awesome whisper. No one else said a word.

Firing had ceased throughout the ship. Emery looked back into the superstructure. It was filled with men. Some had even clambered to the top of the ruined bridge. But there was no cheering. With white faces and lowered jaws, they had watched the spectacle.

The ensign in the conning-tower had stopped the engines. He reported, touching his cap with his trembling fingers.

"Electrician just called up conning-tower, sir, to inform you locator's in operation again. Says there's a submarine or something very close to us, can't find which way she's heading."

Just then the bell rang in the conning-tower. Quickly Captain Howarth stepped past the shield, jumped inside, and picked up the telephone.

"Hullo, this is Captain Howarth."

"Beg pardon, sir; seems to be something wrong with the locator, cannot put any dependence on it, sir. There was a large vessel very close to us, in fact, almost underneath us, yet now there is no trace of her."

The captain hung up the telephone. He could imagine the great fabric sinking down into the green waters to the eternal darkness of her everlasting resting-place.

Once more he stepped out to the open air.

"What are these men doing up here?" he asked, noticing the groups in the superstructure. "Below with them, to their stations!"

A lieutenant, the same that had spoken to Emery on the gun-deck, touched his cap quickly.

"Beg pardon, sir, we can't go below until the smoke has cleared out a bit. It's killing there. Look here, sir; these men we had to carry up."

The bloody, splintered deck was covered with limp forms. Some breathing faintly, others motionless. The lieutenant as he spoke shook like a man with a fever. He lisped horribly, his lips and tongue were parched and swollen. His hair and mustache were green as if they had been dipped in dye. The black silk neckerchief he wore had changed colour also, and his coat was spattered as if with fine splashes of green pigment.

No shots were being fired at the *Arizona* now. The battle had swept past her to the eastward. As she turned, those on the deck could see what was going on. Two miles away the fleets were hand to hand, stabbing and cutting and slashing at one another, as they had fought in the olden days, broadside to broadside, yard-arm to yard-arm. The whiteheads were at their deadly work as more than one lurching, mortally wounded vessel showed. It was no place for fragile destroyer or torpedo craft, however; they would not have

lived a minute on the surface of that steel-lashed sea.

"See if you can't get these men below to their stations, Mr. Purdy," said the admiral, repeating the captain's order. "We must get back; we can't let those fellows fight it out alone."

All at once a man spoke from the ruins of the bridge where he had climbed with several others:

"There are some fellows off there, sir, hanging on to a bit of wreckage. There are a lot more astern, sir."

Another man next to him cried quickly:—

"There's an officer. Here, just below."

Without explaining his action the man lifted both hands above his head and dived straight and clean the full thirty feet down to the water. Emery and some of the officers rushed to the starboard side. Captain Howarth followed them and immediately took command of the work of rescue. There were no boats to lower away, for the only two that the *Arizona* had taken with her had been badly torn and splintered, although they were back of the armoured wall. But the big life-raft, just abaft the funnels, was still intact. In a few minutes it had been hoisted outboard and lowered safely into the water. In the meantime men had clambered down the sides, and the sailor who had dived out had been hauled close up to the sea-ladder. He was supporting the body of

a gray-haired, smooth-shaven man who, to all appearances, was lifeless. Many hands helped him with his burden up to the deck. Then it was seen that the unconscious form was dressed in a blue coat with wide bands of gilt braid at sleeve half reaching to the elbow.

Admiral Benton took one long look and leaped back, startled.

"Sir John Boltwood!" he exclaimed. "Send for a doctor! Quick! Below with him! Kelcey, where is Dr. Kelcey?"

Captain Howarth spoke now to the dripping sailor who had brought the officer to the surface.

"You've done well, my lad," he said quietly.

A man in the crowd muttered something that was not heard distinctly.

"Hell, Bill, you've done enough; you've saved the British admiral."

The executive and Emery were directing the efforts of those on the clumsy life-raft to pick up the few survivors. Fifteen or twenty men had already swum or been helped to the side of the ship, and the life-raft was paddling out to where a half dozen more were clinging to one of the bridge gratings, when a shot came roaring and tearing, just clear of the wave tops, and striking the *Arizona* on the armour belt, broke into a thousand singing, whirring pieces.

"See if you can't get these men below to their

stations, Captain Howarth," whispered the admiral, whose mind was all alert and whose weakness seemed to have left him. "We must get back to join our line as soon as possible. Tell them to hurry in with that life-raft. I don't suppose they know what we're up to, or they wouldn't fire at us. Wasn't that strange, picking up Boltwood? He and I used to know each other well —gave me a dinner when the squadron was at Malta, poor fellow. I hope—hullo! here comes one of them back to us."

"Below to your stations, every one!" roared Captain Howarth. "Call them up in the turrets. Tell them forward to commence firing with their twelve- and eight-inch guns. Hold the fire of the after turret until we get that life-raft alongside. Get those rescued men aboard and let her drift."

While the life-raft was being brought alongside, the forward battery had opened on an English battle-ship that had detached herself from the rest and that had come to a stop, broadside on, about five miles off to the westward. She fired very slowly, as if at target-practice; but luckily at first her range was bad and high, and the rescued men to the number of fourteen, and the volunteer crew of the life-raft, were taken on board in safety.

The fumes had cleared away a little in the 'tween decks. The men who were able to move had

staggered back to their posts; the rest were taken down to the lower deck. But some beyond the need of moving were left lying with their yellow-stained faces gazing blankly at the skies, amid the other bodies about the silent five-inch guns.

Soon the uninjured starboard side was in action; shot for shot was exchanged with the British battle-ship. The fighting, turmoiling line, still mingled, forged over to the west.

It was a duel now, but one where the odds were even, and the *Arizona* had her best side with which to fight. A life-giving breeze had sprung up that carried her own sickening smoke away from her. It was very different fighting one vessel from sustaining the fire of several, and it appeared that the English battle-ship was using her forward turret only. The admiral and the other officers were now out in the open on the port side of the conning-tower, sheltering themselves behind it.

Captain Howarth, who was looking through his powerful binoculars, made a discovery. Some accident had happened on board the Englishman. He guessed it correctly. What they had taken for the bursting of a shell close to the deck had been the explosion of one of her own guns. Nevertheless, she did not give up, but kept her position abreast of the *Arizona*. To the north-west the battle seemed to be going as fierce as

ever. A big vessel, English or American, it was difficult to determine which, appeared to be on fire. Dense volumes of gray-green smoke rolled over her side like the clouds from a burning oil tank. All of the atmosphere to the north and east was tinged with the greenish vapours. They had banked up till they looked like a line of moving, undulating lowland. The battle seemed centred now about one point. Here and there drifted vessels apparently out of the fighting. At a distance it was impossible to make out if they were friend or enemy.

But clearly now it could be seen that three of them were coming out from the ruck in the direction of the *Arizona* to her antagonist's assistance. In a few minutes more they would be within range.

Admiral Benton looked back at the two flags that were still flying from the pierced and dented mainmast. He remembered how he had made up his mind that those flags would not come down at any order of his. When they were to be lowered, the ship would be going with them. The awful picture of the sinking *Polyphemus* came before him. There was no use trying to run with two of the forward compartments and one of the after flooded. He could scarcely make sixteen knots an hour. They would pick him up before he had gone ten miles.

Captain Howarth looked at him and then glanced back at the battle-flags. Had they any right for the sake of pride to sacrifice further lives upon its altar? He remembered that down below was a British admiral. The doctor's reports had said that he was recovering consciousness and would live.

Commander Keene, who had been standing out boldly to one side of the conning-tower, now spoke.

"It's a very strange thing, sir," he said, coming close and shouting into the admiral's ear, for the latter's hearing had returned a little. "Not a shot has come near us for over a minute, yet she seemed to be firing."

The party rushed out from the shelter of the conning-tower. Emery jumped across to the top of the turret. The English ship was firing quickly. Her shots were striking the water about a quarter of a mile away from her, leaping and tearing off in all directions. Then, as all were watching her, a tall water-spout sprang from against her side.

"The *Adder* again!" cried the captain.

The vessels that were coming out to their consort's assistance stopped and circled slowly. The noise of the battle had dwindled away to a few distant shots. The fight was evidently over. It would have been suicidal to have returned to

it. The *Arizona* ploughed on to southward in full flight now, but with her flags still flying. The men were ordered on deck. Weak with their labours in the close air below, they tottered up the ladders.

Emery went aft to assist Commander Keene in directing those able to work in clearing away the wreckage. The wind was blowing fresher and stronger from the southeast. Emery looked back to see what had become of the English battle-ship. Although a moment before she had been in sight, and the whole horizon line had been dotted with black hulls, there was nothing now to be seen. Everything was shrouded in a gray-green, smoky mist.

CHAPTER XIV

THE NEWS AND THE MYSTERY

At one o'clock of the morning of the day following the battle, the President had been aroused from a fitful slumber by loud knocking at his door. Rising quickly he opened it, and found Mr. Crawford, the private secretary, standing there fully dressed.

"You must come to the department at once, sir," he said. "Mr. Crantz has sent for you."

"Is there bad news?"

"Well, sir, I don't know what it means exactly, but a message came by wireless a few minutes ago."

"From whom? from whom?" questioned the President, hoarsely.

"Indirectly from a press boat, sir, and yet from the fleet. It is a little perplexing. The message is signed by Captain Williams who was in command of one of the destroyers, and was received at Cape Charles. It appears that he caught the press boat, sir, and impressed her system into service."

The President had almost pulled Mr. Craw-

ford into the dressing-room by main strength and was hurrying into his clothes — for he disdained a valet — as he carried on the conversation.

"But you haven't told me — you haven't told me what has happened; let's hear the worst — out with it!"

"Well, sir," the secretary lowered his voice into a whisper, "it's too awful — our fleet is altogether captured or destroyed. The British vessels may appear off the coast to-morrow. General Goddard and the committee have been sent for to meet you at the navy department."

Almost trembling, the President followed the secretary down the hall and descended the broad staircase. He got a glimpse out of the window of the calm, moonlit night. Down toward the Potomac River stretched the great terraces and lawns, and, rising against the sky, the slender white needle of the Washington monument. It was all so peaceful, so far from thoughts of war or turmoil, that he feared to think of what had happened. He feared the knowledge that would soon be his, and for that matter would be soon shouted and spread about the country. What might happen? What would the people say? Whose fault was it? Where did the blame lie? The secretary opened the little door leading out into the garden. The cool, fresh air met the

President's hot brow with almost a shock that gave him pain. Only a few steps had he taken when he stopped short.

"They have it! — they have it in the city!".

Yes, that was all they cared for — the news, and what they could make of it — the news!

Welling up from the great avenue to the eastward came the hoarse cry, "Extra! Extra!" A carriage with two horses at a gallop went clattering down the street outside the gates. A few people on foot could be seen running across the park by the entrance. Lights began to blaze in the dwelling-houses. For two months they had glared all night from the dingy public buildings.

The President was met at the head of the stairway, as he turned to the big building of the navy department, by a group of silent men.

"This is dreadful, gentlemen," he said, "dreadful!"

No one replied. They followed behind him into the secretary's office, where General Goddard, the chief of the bureau of navigation, the chief of the bureau of ordnance, and a few other military and naval men in uniform were bending over some maps that lay spread out on the tables. The Vice-President, forceful and alert, came forward to meet his chief.

"Mr. President," he said, "do you remember what old Admiral Howarth said to us yesterday

at the meeting with Mr. Westland? 'If the worst should happen, there's one side of the old ship left.'" Then in a lower voice he added, "We must not let them destroy a single stick in the navy-yards, nor sink a single vessel; wait till we know — wait till we know the truth."

Even in doling out the news, *The Voice* could not be truthful. The first edition of the Extra began with the great word "VICTORY!" and just beneath it, "THE FLEETS ARE NOW FIGHTING!" It was a hodge-podge of misrepresentation, printed as if received directly from the field of battle. It gave little information and was only a succession of cleverly worded subhead-lines. Within half an hour there came another, soon followed by a third and fourth. But what is the use of going farther? People stopped buying the extras and waited for the official bulletins. Before daylight the facts were known, although the exact details were impossible to obtain. Troops were being hurried to the seaboard. The nation stood aghast.

The captain of the destroyer that had escaped was rushed on to Washington by special train. He had but a short story to tell. He had been ordered to keep out of the fighting as much as possible, in order to be ready to carry any despatches that it might be found necessary to send. He could not account for the failure of the wire-

less system, and could only give his own version of the affair. He had seen what he had seen, and that was the wonderful charge of the American ships after the explosion of the submarines — two things entirely unexpected and unanticipated. He had stayed until the firing had almost ceased and until he was in danger of capture. Then he had headed to the westward and had come up with the press boat *Acasta*. He had found that one of her engines had broken down and that her wireless system for some reason was not working properly; but in order to prevent any news from getting out to the public before the department had been informed, much to the displeasure of the representatives of *The Voice*, he had taken possession of her in the name of the Government. So far as he knew his vessel was the sole survivor of the battle off the capes.

But a great surprise awaited the country at large. Before ten o'clock in the morning of the day after the fight, a vessel had appeared off the Chesapeake. The forts were warned and were in readiness; the mortar batteries, blindly obeying the men in the range-finders, waited for the word; the great sixteen-inch guns trained on her as she came nearer and nearer. But she forged ahead undaunted, and soon it was seen that the torpedo-boats that had been sent out to meet her had turned and were returning with her. Before

long it was known that the flagship *Arizona* had come to anchor off Hampton Roads.

How different was her return from her departure! Grimy and dented and pierced, she lay there solitary and alone. No one was allowed to board her, a patrolling tug circled about to warn off all intruders. The people in rowboats and sailboats gazed at her in silence from a distance. A few of the bolder ones shouted questions to the men working about the decks, but the latter made no reply; orders were strict. No one was allowed to approach the landing, and the wounded were transferred to a tug and taken ashore to the hospital. The dead, with the exception of the bodies of four officers, had been put over the side, consigned to the great burial-ground of the sailor at daybreak.

Admiral Benton, accompanied by Captain Howarth and Lieutenant Emery, had gone ashore in the first boat to leave the vessel's side. Seated in the stern-sheets with them was a thick-set, smooth-shaven man of sixty, dressed in a blue serge suit; silent and stern-faced he sat there, never saying a word. At the landing-place the boat was met by the commandant of the yard; a quiet introduction followed. The commandant, despite his politeness, was hard put to it to conceal his surprise. As they walked up the gravel path the commandant paired off

with Captain Howarth, talking in a low, excited voice. The smooth-shaven man held back, however, and took hold of the admiral's arm.

"Benton," he said, "you've been very good to me. The fortunes of war are strange fortunes; but I don't wish to be a burden. I've changed my mind; I don't think I will go on to Washington. Is there not some quiet place where I could subside for a while, after communicating with my Government, in order to let them know that I am alive?"

There were no heroics in the British admiral's words or tone. He had never expressed the wish that he had been allowed to sink in his grand old vessel to the bottom. Since he had recovered consciousness, an hour or two after his rescue, he had accepted matters quietly and philosophically. He knew he had won the day, and he was grieved, actually grieved, at the feelings of his captors. He and Admiral Benton had been friends for many years, and he had known Howarth also, and the latter's father. They had been on the China station together twenty odd years before. But it was a strange position that he occupied. He was not a prisoner in one sense, for he had never surrendered, and yet in another sense he was, and for that reason he hated to ask too many privileges. The relation between the American admiral and himself had been that of host and guest. Admiral

Benton turned, in reply to the question that Sir John had asked him.

"Why, I have the idea," he said. "You come on to Philadelphia with us. My purse is at your disposal. Emery here will look out for you, and I know of just the place for you to go to. You will be as obscure as a college boy on rustication. My brother has a little place up in the Alleghanies, plenty of trout-fishing, and no one will know you are in the neighbourhood. I'll make all the arrangements for you, and you need say nothing more, my dear sir, nothing more."

As they passed out of the yard, driving on their way to the railway station, no one imagined that the prosperous-appearing citizen on the back seat of the old-fashioned carryall was the admiral of the dreaded English fleet. It was not until the next day that the news leaked out that he was the guest of the nation. Of course the yellow press made much of the whole matter; pages and pages were filled with details of the carnage and the bravery, but nothing could rouse the country from its sense of loss. Even the expected appearance of the enemy within the next few hours and the predicted direful consequences could not turn their thoughts from the blow they had sustained. They spoke yet in whispers about the thousands of brave men whose fate was yet unknown. The war gripped at their heartstrings; the black

shadow fell heavy upon their homes. The glory of the combat could not dispel the universal gloom — the sacrifice had been too great, the reckoning too heavy. At the capital it was all mourning. Although the result might have been expected, the hopeless consternation, almost the despair, that settled upon the navy department could not have been foretold.

The news from Canada also was far from reassuring. Further conquest did not appear so easy, the weather was still bad, and a reconnaissance in force had been turned back and almost changed into a defeat at Rivière du Loup. But one thing above all was the cause of the universal uneasiness — the lack of absolute information. Where had the victorious fleet gone to? What now was its destination? It was rumoured again that after making repairs it was headed for New England; but no news had been received, no ships had been sighted. What could it mean?

A heavy storm had sprung up in the afternoon of Sunday, the day of the *Arizona's* arrival in Hampton Roads, and at three o'clock the news came that four large ships were ashore on the shoals off Panamores Island, some thirty miles to the north of Cape Charles. Despite the bad weather, two of the American cruisers that had been left at Hampton Roads put out to sea.

Before they had gone an hour the rumour about the ships ashore was confirmed. Two, from appearances, were American cruisers and one was a British battle-ship, and there was a small gun-boat or despatch vessel. The mystery increased; no one could tell what had happened. One of the scouting cruisers, the *Monticello*, had kept on to the eastward until almost upon the scene where the battle had taken place. She had passed through miles of floating wreckage, flotsam and jetsam of the fight, hammocks and gratings, and articles that would float, and, alas! scores of dead bodies, English and American. She kept on some miles to the northward.

When about to return, late in the evening, she sighted three vessels to the northeast, two drifting half submerged. She headed for them where they lurched and swung, sweeping along in the rushing waters of the Gulf Stream. No reply came to her signals. The vessels, to all appearances, were abandoned. Yet one of them, an English cruiser of eight thousand tons, seemed practically unhurt, the waves breaking against her tall top sides harmlessly as she buoyantly rose and fell. It was too rough to lower a boat, and the *Monticello* hove to, to windward of the derelicts, waiting for dawn and for the time when the seas might go down. It was a weird watch she kept that night. Her search-light, swinging and sway-

ing as she rolled and twisted in the sea, throwing its great white jet out into the darkness. The night had turned fairly clear, and each lonely vessel, as it came into the bright white patch, was outlined distinct and plain. Just at midnight one of the worst wounded of her forlorn charges disappeared, sinking suddenly and swiftly without a warning. But in the gray of the morning there was the fine English cruiser meeting the buffets of the sea, and close beside her, rolling decks under, was the abandoned American. Far to the north were three more vessels almost hull down, no smoke was coming from their funnels; they were drifting like the others.

As soon as it was possible, the *Monticello* lowered a cutter and the crew pulled away for the Englishman. They had gone but half the distance when the captain of the *Monticello* saw something that caused the chills to start tingling down his spine — slowly but surely a gun in a sponson in the Englishman's starboard battery was swinging round in his direction. Instantly the *Monticello's* bugle called to quarters, but the English gun stopped moving before it was brought to bear. Those in the cutter apparently had not seen the threatened danger and rowed on. The little boat was almost beneath, and had passed the monster bows that towered above her, when the lieutenant in the stern-sheets rose to his feet. A

head had appeared aft over the edge of the superstructure. A little face under the vizor of a midshipman's cap could be made out, and a shrill, weak voice called: —

"Keep off! keep off!"

It was so unexpected and so ghostly that the lieutenant could not reply.

"Keep off!" the shrivelled voice repeated. The men at the oars looked up, their faces puzzled and frightened.

"Give way, together!" the lieutenant cried suddenly. "Hullo! there's her name, *Carnation*. In the bow there, make fast to that mooring shackle, and tumble on board some of you!"

With the help of the broken falls that were hanging from one of the after davits, five of the crew clambered up to the after deck. They were unarmed, for they had expected no resistance. But one man had caught up a stretcher in his hand before he had left the thwart. As the cutter rose to a wave, the lieutenant made a clever jump and two men reached down to help him; he landed safely on the deck, but he did not move. A faint quavering voice was speaking; the lieutenant did not know from whence it came, but he had heard the words distinctly.

"Come, come," he replied, "there'd be no sense in that."

The babbling, broken voice began again. The

lieutenant placed it now. It came from the after turret, whose great silent guns stretched almost overhead. The lieutenant spoke quietly.

"Come, be a man," he said.

One of the bowmen who had been the first to board crept forward until he was under the counterpoise of the turret. The little hatch above his head was open; the man squirmed through it like a ferret through a rat-hole. There came a cry from inside.

"I've got him, sir!"

A second afterward his legs reappeared and then his body, and he hauled out a bedraggled little midshipman, and placed him on the deck.

"I'd blown the ship up if I could," the boy sobbed, "only I couldn't get the shell out of the hoist to drop it — damn it all," he added piteously.

"Come, be a man," the lieutenant repeated, bending over him. "What happened?"

"There's only four of us alive — we couldn't get up steam," the boy replied.

The *Monticello* came up abreast the English vessel.

"On board the cruiser there!"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"What is her name? — what's happened?"

"The *Carnation*, sir, abandoned."

The man who carried the boat stretcher had

climbed up the ladder to the after bridge; he dropped his improvised weapon suddenly and called to the lieutenant.

"My God, sir," he cried hoarsely, "it's an awful sight up here!"

CHAPTER XV

THE AFTERMATH

OVER the cable from Bermuda had come great news for England. A swift cruiser had slid into the crowded anchorage after a spurt of three hundred miles. The waiting warships that soon expected to coöperate with Admiral Boltwood's fleet in the dictation of terms to the American seaboard boomed their guns in welcome. All Hamilton was at the water front; the word spread quickly. It had a glorious victory, but a costly one. The American navy had been wiped out; it no longer existed, except in three weak and scattered squadrons, a few small cruisers, and a half score of decrepid old guardships. So far as then was known but one vessel had escaped. But alas! almost ship for ship, for those that had been sunk, England had lost her own. Nearly a third of her fleet was sunk or permanently disabled. Her flagship had gone down with all on board, brave Sir John Boltwood, of the race of admirals, was no more. Many of the English vessels and many of the prizes needed repairs, so it was understood that more than half the fleet would soon

be in Bermuda. It was expected that at least six war vessels and four large transports would have to be detached to carry the wounded and the prisoners back to England. Once more the descent on the coast would have to be deferred.

London went mad that night. Her unrestrained joy seemed little tempered by the news of the awful carnage. But so it is with a people when at war — victory was victory, dead men but dead men! What counted slaughter if they could wear the laurel; it could hide the mourning wreath! There were more heroes' names for the monuments, another Nelson had been added to the roll of fame. The greatest battle of all times upon the sea had been fought and won. The only foe that had ever humbled Britain's pride upon the water, was now humbled in turn forever. As *The Times* had it, "No nation could survive such a crushing blow undaunted." There was a note of pity, almost, for the vanquished; boldly expressed were some opinions that now the war might cease. In her pride, England could be generous and more than generous, she could be just. Some people could not help but tell how glad they were that the Americans had fought so bravely. Outnumbered at the beginning, they had shown all the traces of the common ancestry. In the thousand speeches that were made that night throughout the kingdom, reference was

made to the brave charge of the dwindling American line of ships. There was no contempt or hatred in the utterances of the press. Yet, it is a matter of record, England rejoiced as she had never done before.

The following day was Sunday; in the churches and cathedrals gathered the great crowds; there were sober prayers of thanksgiving, anthems of praise, grateful voices raised to the God who giveth victory. Freely were hopes expressed that soon it all might end.

Strange to relate, the arms of the United States that had been taken from the entrance to the offices of the American embassy had been restored early that Sunday morning. A cheering mob of students, parading the streets of Oxford, had hushed their clamour and gone by the house of an aged and well-known American philanthropist who lived in England, in respectful silence.

But as the crowds poured out from the churches on that bright Sunday morning, they met other crowds standing on the street corners.

What was the rumour that was sweeping over the town and out into the country? What could it mean? The Prime Minister and the Secretary for War had been summoned by a messenger from divine worship. An insidious, awful whisper was going from lip to lip. Men blanched when they heard it. Could it be true? The

admiralty office was besieged by newspaper men. Automobiles raced to and fro from the House of Parliament to St. James's and Pall Mall. In every editorial office the telephone bells were jingling. Could the awful rumour be substantiated? Was it true or false?

How the information of any catastrophe had leaked out, the board of admiralty could not imagine, for the second despatch from Bermuda had come in cipher. But it soon became known that the word had come from Paris; the Paris papers had it before London knew of it. Before that afternoon was out, however, the truth was known; the shock of the awful news swept throughout Great Britain.

Not many hours after the arrival of the cruiser with the red-hot funnels at Bermuda, there had come a wavering, uncertain message; then there had limped in another vessel all alone. No trailing fleet followed in her wake, no once proud prizes with the Union jack fluttering above the stars and stripes. It was dire word the second messenger had brought.

After the last American warship to keep in action, the grand old *Maine*, had succumbed to the cordon of her foes, firing the final shots from guns, lips down to the level of the sea, the British vice-admiral had flown the order for all hands

to stand by and save as many of their own men and of the enemy as they could. An hour or more after the departure of the first despatch bearer to Bermuda, just as she had gone out of sight to the southward, a slight moist wind had sprung up in the east.

The low, greenish bank of battle fumes that had spread for miles along the horizon had mingled with the fog. The old cruiser *Durban*, laden and supplied as an ammunition ship, had caught fire in the middle of the action and automatically her great magazines had been flooded, while her crew had taken to the boats; but the magazines had not been completely swamped. The dampened lynite had burnt for hours, like a gigantic coston light, and the fumes, almost impenetrable to the sunlight, had drifted eastward and augmented the thick layer of strange-looking vapour. The chemical combination of the strong acid gases and those formed by the discharge of the American explosive, oddite, coagulating in the dampness, formed now a greenish white fog that clung close to the water, rising to a height of thirty or forty feet.

Like the billowing smoke of a prairie fire, it rolled along before the eastern wind that sprang up just as the night was falling. The first sign of its approach was a stinging of the eyes and a distressful coughing of the men employed in the

work of repair and rescue that was going on. The vapour began to grow thicker and thicker, its quality more nauseous. A gun from the vice-admiral's flagship called attention to the signals he was making; the orders were for all vessels capable of proceeding under steam to head north by west. But men were dropping by that time, strangling and gasping for air. They clawed at their throats and chests, crying and choking, rushing here and there. The men at the wheel of the flagship fell, and she, first to get under way, or at least to attain her speed, ran amuck through the fleet, sinking her sister ship and narrowly escaping the ram of another, until at last the engine room received word, and her engines were stopped.

"To the holds! — down below to the holds!" was the cry.

Lower and lower the flight of men went in their efforts to obtain a release from the strangling atmosphere, to escape the deadly fog. They opened the hatches to the double bottoms and crowded in there. The wind for a time died away, and the vessels, like a fleet of charnel ships, heaved up and down, or ploughed ahead, in some cases with men trying to work their course blindly from the engine room. But soon the ventilators being closed, the oil spray refused to burn. The engineers and oilers were driven from their

posts. But the wind increased, and the bitter quality of the air at last diminished. When it was possible for the crews to move gradually out from their places of refuge, how few the survivors that were able to help work the ships! Where some vessels had crews of six or seven hundred, not a fifth of the number were able to lift their hands; another fifth lay helpless, with reeking lungs, along the decks. Almost two-fifths of the brave men who had survived the brunt of the battle, victors and vanquished, were to all appearance beyond help or hope of recall. A half score of the worst disabled vessels drifted in toward the coast, with their machinery helpless and no one to repair it. The vice-admiral, who had survived, distributed the able-bodied men among those vessels capable of self-propulsion, and taking in tow the others that he could reach, all that was left of the grand and mighty fleet headed southeast for Bermuda. The wreck of England's pride was there. Ahead of the floating hospitals a cruiser led the way, but eight hours after the one that was speeding on with the news of the great victory.

Nothing could be written that would exactly describe the condition of mind into which the people of England were now plunged. Amazement, horror, hopelessness, were followed by a wild cry for revenge. The accidental and un-

expected reaping of the battle harvest, the awful aftermath, was ascribed at first to Yankee invention and devilish cunning. The widespread, unwritten, but well-understood, rules so-called, of civilized warfare, had been broken. The loosening of deadly vapours was as bad as poisoning wells, worse than assassination, lower than the murder of hostages; and soon it became known that hardly a third of the fleet had reported at Bermuda, and not more than a third of the prizes. What had become of the rest?

What? Soon it was known that the American squadron at New York and a flotilla of tugs and merchant steamers were out searching for the derelicts. They were brought into American harbours, dreadful exhibits of the effect of modern warfare. All haste would soon be made to repair them, but there were few experienced men now left to man, operate, and command them. One-half of the American vessels had gone to the bottom, one-third of the British suffered the same fate, one-third was picked up helpless, and the remainder limped eastward toward Bermuda.

No happening of the war at sea between Japan and Russia had warned naval men of this. It was an accident — an unexpected "rub" of the game that no one had foretold.

Notwithstanding the lesson, within a fortnight the British fleet from Halifax, joining with the

one from the St. Lawrence, made an attack upon the eastern entrance to Long Island Sound. But it was more in the nature of a reconnaissance in force than attempt to force a passage. The mortar batteries held them off, and two small vessels were lost in the mine fields in Vineyard Haven Sound. The ships withdrew.

Slowly it became known now through England, through the experiments of scientists and military men, that the awful aftermath was the result, not of deliberate intention, but of accident; that there was no premeditation and no expectation of the consequences on the part of either of the combatants. It was a common grief the warring nations shared. One thing was proved necessary, however: a change in the method of making explosives. Even the powder used in the small arm of Great Britain, if burnt in large quantities, had a bad effect upon men breathing it. It stung the eyes and caused sore throats and sudden hacking coughs. In many cases it produced nausea and a semi-insensibility.

Germany, France, and Russia were obtaining full reports. France, who like Russia never forgave England her attitude during the great war of 1904, could not conceal her exultation over the sudden turn affairs had taken. America and England were for a time, when the flare of the hatred had died down and the cry of vengeance

had subsided, drawn almost together by the bond of their common sorrow. Now was the time for them to stop and think. But stop they could not; to think they were too busy.

They were in the position of two people who having gone to law were thoroughly convinced that neither side of the case was flawless. Yet they could not agree upon the costs, and therefore determined to fight it out to the end, or until the verdict was awarded.

Just at this time an unknown English inventor, a little chemist, who lived in an obscure town in Cheshire, and who rejoiced in the name of Blodgkitten, invented a new smokeless powder. It was tested in secret and the war office rejoiced. It actually increased the muzzle velocity of the arms of all caliber, and smelled sweet to the nostrils as the breath of new-mown hay. With great secrecy, the Government went about manufacturing it on a large scale. A quality claimed for the new powder, also, was the fact that the noise of its detonation when used with the new "Ross muzzle muffler" was practically nothing, — the report, owing to the small amount of explosive used, not being much louder for the ordinary service rifle than the report of a flobert.

The long-threatened movement for the reduction of Quebec and the concentration of the American forces on both sides of the St. Law-

rence began almost as soon as the snows had disappeared. The flagging war spirit of both countries revived a little. The tremendous fleet of transports which England had organized was in readiness to take on board the waiting troops. Nearly one hundred war vessels were scattered at different ports on the shores of both channels, and it was expected that within four weeks the army in Nova Scotia and in Canada would be swelled to over eight hundred thousand men.

The English and Scotch shipyards were busy finishing the battle-ships already on the stocks and repairing those injured in the battle off the capes. Heavily convoyed, the first detachment of reënforcements began to arrive at Halifax. America was startled by the news that the island of Mount Desert had been seized and invasion of the mainland threatened. The war was on her threshold.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WIZARD'S WARNING

THE special train from Washington stopped at a new wooden platform with a glaringly unpainted shanty of a waiting room at the farther end. A long, straight roadway, over which ran a trolley, led off through the meadows where the rank grass waved out of the stagnant water, to a squat, ugly little brick building with a tall chimney. Paralleling the roadway was a double line of telegraph poles with strong cross-beams, depending from which were heavy cables, two running beside the track back to the city of Newark, and two others crossing the marshes to a group of factory buildings over a mile away to the west.

It was a damp, unpromising day; occasional little drizzling showers would drift across the meadows and disappear. The sky was gray and cold.

Out of the small waiting room, as the train drew up, stepped a party of men dressed in great-coats. Talking volubly and including them all in his conversation, was Mr. Westland, the Wizard of Staten Island.

"Then, you see," he was going on, talking until the last minute, "I resolved the whole thing to this: Sing a note of music, true to a key, only the chord will respond that is in exact tune with your note, and—" he broke off suddenly—"Ah, here they are."

From the steps of the special car descended the President of the United States, most of the members of his Cabinet, or better, advisory committee, Mr. Crantz, the Vice-President, General Goddard, the Headquarters Staff, and three men in naval uniform. The groups joined together with a burst of salutation, much hand-shaking, and talk. Mr. Westland was presented to the President and then to Mr. Crantz. The latter laughed.

"Westland and I need no introduction," he said. "If he has forgotten, I have not, the time that we crossed together on the *Kronprinz*, when I took him for a musician."

"Oh, no, I remember," Mr. Westland replied, smiling. "And you were not so far off. If I only had time, I believe I could compose an opera. I understand the theory of musical balance, the poise, I should say—oh, I beg pardon—"

Admiral Howarth had taken Westland by the arm.

"Allow me to present to you Admiral Benton," he said.

The Wizard held the admiral's hand a long time in his, and beamed on him out of beautiful brown eyes.

"Sir," he said, "it is an honour."

"And my son, Captain Howarth," the admiral went on, "and Lieutenant Emery, all of the *Arizona*."

"Oh, that dreadful fight — that awful, horrible combat, how I wished I could have stopped it; but you would not wait for me."

Two big tears actually rolled down the Wizard's cheek.

"And now, gentlemen," interrupted Marbury Thornton, changing the subject briskly, "here is the trolley; in two minutes we are in the workshop. All is arranged. Mr. Westland promises us a very pretty exposition of his theories on vibration."

Into the car the party crowded quickly. Admiral Howarth sat next to his son. Although he had only seen him once, and that for a short time, since his return from the conflict, he treated him exactly as if he had seen him every day.

"Cigar, Max?" he asked, taking a large leather case out of his pocket.

"Thank you, sir."

"Emery, you'll have one?"

"Yes, sir; thank you."

The old sailor had gone back to the condescen-

sion of the rank that has its privileges. If his son and the lieutenant had not been in uniform, his manner might not have been so pronounced, but as all three were unconscious of it, it did not much matter.

Captain Howarth turned to his father.

"What is this experiment that they have dragged us down here to see; do you know anything about it, sir?"

The admiral lowered his voice, "Not much, but Westland is going to stop the war, he says."

"I would to God he would," replied the captain.

"And so do I," echoed Emery, fervently.

"Now, my dear boy," whispered Admiral Howarth, "don't let any of us refer to, or think of, that awful happening of six weeks ago. It is simply too dreadful, too unspeakable! The idea of all those fine young fellows, many of whom I remember so well — yes, on both sides, on both sides! — gone, gone! and for what?"

The old gentleman rambled on, his voice almost breaking and his eyes suffused with moisture. His son tried to distract him.

"You've heard that Admiral Boltwood is better, father? He's going to be exchanged next week. I believe they are going to send him to Jamaica with the first cartel."

"By Jove, then I must see him before he goes,"

brightened the admiral. "I wrote him at the hospital in Pittsburg as soon as I heard he was ill. Fine sailor, Boltwood; what a marvellous escape!"

"Here we are, gentlemen, at the Wizard's workshop," suddenly spoke Marbury Thornton.

The party passed through a small doorway into a wide, octagonal-shaped room. Lining the sides were huge dynamos of the largest kind. To all appearance the place was but a power-house for some great traction company. Huge cables led out to another building, separated from the octagonal one by the space of some twenty yards and connected with it by a small wooden bridge.

Mr. Westland's manner had now changed entirely; his languid eyes sparkled, his voice rang, his speech was short and crisp. With almost a peremptory order he ushered his guests into the next building across the bridge.

Down the centre ran the heavy wires from the dynamos. There was a circular, veranda-looking affair at one end with a round door about seven feet in diameter, through which the party stepped. Here they found themselves encompassed by slabs of gleaming eolite, the white glassy surface curving on all sides about them. They stood as it were in the mouth of a great glass horn whose lips spread out before them. In the centre, supported upon a glass tripod, was an instrument that

looked exactly like one of the huge fog signals used to warn vessels off the shoals. From the centre of the flaring mouthpiece extended a large round brass ball, some two feet in diameter, and fringing it about the edges was a double row of sharp steel points. Radiating from the bottom of this glass veranda were five long board walks extending for half a mile out into the meadow. At the end of each was an altarlike structure built of brick.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Westland, as the party grouped themselves on the edge, "at the termini of these walks, on the pedestals you see there, I have placed various explosives. They are numbered in accordance with the diagrams on the cards which I have given you. You can easily read of what they consist. The centre one is oddite in its new form, the fumes of which, let us hope, will be less hard upon the lungs and membranes. Of course the force I use will be projected much farther than the ends of these short walks; but I wish to prove to you that the energy needed to explode one (composed of certain ingredients whose electrical resistance is known) will not explode another whose component parts are different and for that reason can maintain a stronger or a less strong resistance. Thus, supposing we come into a room where there is a piano —"

"We are lost now," Thornton whispered to

Rice, who stood at his elbow; "he's begun on the music again."

"— and we sing a note," continued the Wizard, not noticing any interruption, "and sing it long and loud enough, we will set in vibration the chord that corresponds — that is what I was saying when the President's train arrived. It is the simplest way to explain what I intend to do. You must take my word for it, gentlemen, that there is no connection by wire with the ends of these board walks. If you care to investigate it now, you can do so, or you can postpone it until after the experiments are over. Now having explained in the manner of showman, although I hope somewhat more intelligently and simply, what I intend to do, we will step back out of the mouthpiece of this huge trumpet that encloses the little one and begin. I have promised General Goddard not to detain him more than an hour, and I can guarantee that in less than that time he will be on his way back to Washington, and his Excellency the President also," he added, as if he had suddenly realized that he had omitted to be polite. The fact was, he had forgotten the President's being there at all.

"Number 1, as we see, is ordinary smokeless powder," the Wizard went on. "Number 2, fulminate of mercury; number 3 is our own, oddite, as I say, in its latest form; number 4 is

lynite, the old English explosive; while number 5 is one you see I have left blank."

"Is there anything there?" asked Admiral Benton.

"Yes," replied the Wizard, "there is something there that I promise you will be heard from; but of that, later."

The party stepped back through the small end of the glass funnel and under Mr. Thornton's direction grouped themselves at two open windows, from which they could get a good view of the brick pedestals.

"Over the tops of the steel cups containing the various explosives," Mr. Thornton explained, "our friend Westland has placed a little box containing some dry flour, in order that we can see the instant it is tossed in the air."

"Now, gentlemen, you will pardon me again for a minute if, like a showman, I disappear," put in Westland. "I just intend to inspect my dynamo connections in order to see that all is in working order."

He hurried back across the foot-bridge to the other building. Ambassador Taintor came up to where the naval men were standing together.

"I have a combination of three feelings," he said; "one that I am going to have my photograph taken, and another that I am about to go up in a balloon, and the third that I am to be

made a fool of. But, to change the subject, how are all those men who were picked up in the submarine *Adder?* What a dreadful experience they must have had! Think of it! Almost two weeks bobbing about, and at the point of starvation."

"They are doing well," Admiral Benton replied, "and so are most of the men whose lungs were affected by the gas fumes. But I don't think we will have many volunteers for that under-water work again. The *Adder* is the only one, so far as we know, that escaped."

"Ah, here comes Mr. Westland," said the President.

The Wizard was returning, walking in long, expectant strides, his face aglow and his eyes sparkling.

"Ready," he called. There came a gentle humming sound from the dynamo building. Mr. Westland's lips, drawn back from his teeth, gleamed under his stubby gray mustache. He stepped over to the side window to the table upon which lay a small instrument with a numbered and lettered keyboard, much to all appearances like a type-writing machine. One of his assistants stood at his elbow. Westland whispered a few words to him, and the man opened the circular door at the small end of the great glass funnel.

"Observe, gentlemen," he said, "how easily we can control the direction of our projector."

The crowd gathered at the opening and watched intently.

Quietly and surely the small trumpetlike arrangement swung like a gun in sighting practice. It obeyed instantly the pressure of a finger, the elevation and direction changed without, apparently, any force to manage it. It was as if it were a live thing, controlled by Mr. Westland's mind. As soon as this demonstration was finished, the door was closed, and the party resumed their positions at the windows. The great inventor went on explaining, his voice rising sharply, with almost a note of excitement. Slowly the projector swept from left to right. It was now throwing out across the meadow intense electrical vibrations, covering, perhaps, a radius of three-quarters of a mile and, at the distance at which the explosives were placed, a diameter of about fifty feet. From right to left it moved, resting on each of the pedestals and then approached the one farthest on the left.

"Watch number 1," cried Marbury Thornton, who had evidently seen the experiment before. Every one held his breath, the way an audience does when expecting the discharge of artillery in a spectacular melodrama. There was a sharp detonation, the pasteboard box leaped into the air,

and there floated for an instant a white filmy cloud. Admiral Howarth looked at his son.

"Success," he whispered beneath his breath. "Success, I swear!"

"Pop goes the weasel!" ejaculated old Mr. Taintor, applauding gently on the back of his left hand with the finger tips of his right.

So the experiment went on, all explosives without injury sustaining the same force that afterward fired the designated one. At last they came to number 5, and announcing his subject, as a lecturer might allude to a picture on a screen, Mr. Westland moved away from the keyboard.

"Gentlemen," he said, "now follows what I brought you here to witness. The importance of the next experiment cannot be overestimated, and so I particularly ask your strict attention." He stepped back to the instruments once more. Carefully he adjusted the key on the switchboard, and like a virtuoso who had found the lost chord, with triumph depicted on his face, he pressed the key. Two seconds went by and then a sharp, stinging crack, like the breaking of a lancewood bow, followed. The little box containing the flour went into fragments, skimming out in all directions; there was hardly a trace of the filmy cloud above the pedestal. Mr. Westland said nothing. He looked at Marbury Thornton; then at last he said:—

"Tell them!"

"That," cried Mr. Thornton, "is the powder that will be carried in every caisson, in every cartridge by the invading British army."

Silence followed, and then General Goddard spoke.

"The new explosive?" he asked.

"Yes."

"How did you obtain possession of it?"

Marbury Thornton smiled.

"A secret, general," he said. "Although tons of it have been made, they have guarded its possession closely. It is to be served to the army some time next week."

Mr. Crantz here asked a question.

"How far can this force be projected?" he inquired.

"It is but a question of power," returned Westland, eagerly, "and power that can be procured for us. It only means the expenditure of dollars to construct machinery that will project the force perhaps a score of miles."

"The subscription books are opened," said Marbury Thornton, quietly.

"And the Government will take all the capital stock," rejoined Mr. Crantz. "Mr. President," he turned to the Chief Executive, "will you accept the position at the head of the society for the suppression of war?"

"I shall," returned the President, as solemnly as if he were taking oath of office. He raised his hand. No one smiled.

"Hullo, hullo! What's this?" suddenly exclaimed Mr. Rice, pointing out of the window.

The party looked in the direction he indicated. Running toward them through the tall sedges, stumbling and plashing through the slimy, muddy pools, was a bareheaded man. Once or twice he fell and scrambled to his feet with difficulty. The assistant opened the circular door, and every one stepped out into the glass funnel. Covered with mud, the man hauled himself up on to one of the board walks, and, almost exhausted, trotted toward them. Then it was seen that he was holding one hand tightly with the other, and that blood was streaming from his fingers.

"A doctor, a doctor!" he gasped, when within speaking distance.

Emery had stepped forward to meet the runner, and he almost fell in the lieutenant's arms.

"Here, let's see where you're hurt, my man. What's happened?"

"It ain't for me," the man gasped. "I ain't hurted much, but my friend down there is almost blowed in two. They all went off sudden like. Every cartridge in his belt. Just tore him all to pieces."

"Who is he? What were you doing down there?" asked Captain Howarth.

"We was crabbing, sir; and he was bending over the stern with a net, and I was rowing, when all of a sudden he just goes off. He breaks right open, sir, just like a fire-cracker, and something hits me across the fingers and here in the arm — bullets, I guess, from the cartridges."

"Who was he?" asked Captain Howarth.

"He's a sergeant from the fort, sir, my cousin — Oh, my God! How'll I tell his wife? Are any of yez a doctor? Perhaps something can be done for him. We brought along a revolver to shoot marsh rats with."

"Where were you?" some one asked.

"Just over there, sir, in the little creek."

He pointed to a place about a mile away.

Marbury Thornton spoke up.

"Gentlemen, I'll see to this — I suppose that you'll be wanting to get back to Washington." Then in a lower voice he added, "But think of it — the awful triumph of that power!"

"Goddard," said Admiral Howarth in a whisper, "where is your boasted artillery now?"

The head of the war department replied nothing. He extended his hands wide in a gesture of puzzled hopelessness, and then dropped them to his sides as if he was exhausted by a severe physical and mental strain.

"Thornton," he said slowly, "you'll bring Westland along to the meeting to-night at Wash-

ington. The rest of us must go at once. Keep this from the papers, on your life."

He turned his glance upon the Wizard, who was talking to his assistant.

Although General Goddard could not have analyzed his feelings at the moment, he was looking at the only man he had ever feared in all his life. There was a strange constraint evident in the departure. There were no loud acclaims or congratulations. They almost tiptoed by the huge and now silent engines that had launched the unseen destruction.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BUILDING OF THE FORCE

WHY the American army in Canada received orders to cease its preparations for the grand movement down the river, the generals at the heads of the divisions could not understand. The fact remains, however, that all attempts at an advance were suddenly abandoned, and the armies north and south of the St. Lawrence rested in their huge cantonments. It was said that the fortifications erected at Quebec had proved to be almost impregnable, and the earthworks that stretched from five miles to the westward of the Chaudière River to St. Michael, south of the railway, had been found so exceedingly strong that it was probable that a long siege and investment was to be part of the plan of the authorities at Washington.

The Voice and *The Verdict* now openly accused the Government of temporizing with the enemy; and when the great fleet of transports, carrying the last of England's huge army, sailed for Nova Scotia, a great howl of apparent anger and disgust was raised. Loud were the complaints,

because the navy department did not at once send out the vessels, that had been hastily overhauled and equipped, to attempt to delay the plan of the enemy, or to destroy its efficiency; but the transport fleet was heavily convoyed, and although the ships of Great Britain did not seek further combat, the immense advantage of numerical strength had been clearly proved, and they still outnumbered any fleet that America could send against them.

The army in Canada now estimated at over six hundred thousand men was not reënforced; in fact, some regiments were withdrawn and sent down to Virginia, where there was slowly gathering another tremendous force of perhaps eight hundred thousand troops. People began to suspect that the authorities had received some secret information, leading them to believe that it was the British intention to land upon the coast of North Carolina, and to seize one of the islands as a base.

What was the great surprise of the country at large when the great Armada suddenly appeared off the coast of Maine, and a landing was made at Mount Desert that had been seized by the squadron under Admiral Kirke. In forty-eight hours Frenchman's Bay was alive with British transports and warships. The cities of Bangor and Milford, Augusta and Portland, were in terror. The country had actually been invaded;

the enemy had secured a base from which it would be difficult to dislodge him. It was stated that the British forces numbered nearly seven hundred thousand, and there was no adequate army to oppose them in New England. Every road running north was now crowded with troops; State reserves and home guards were mobilized; Boston seconded Augusta, Portland, and Bangor in a cry for help.

"Stop the enemy at the Penobscot!" became the shout of the newspapers.

At Mariaville and Elsworth the Maine militia came in contact with the advanced guards of the enemy and fell back to join the army distributed along the south bank of the river.

It was another month and more, now, since the day of the experiments on the New Jersey Flats. There was a feeling of mystery in the air. For three weeks before the great invasion, train-loads of machinery from all parts of the country had been hurried northward. Thousands and thousands of workmen were busy on the sloping hills and woodlands of the Maine watershed. With an incredible swiftness great electric plants were installed in a hundred different places. What it meant no one could tell exactly; that the English were informed that something was afoot that was out of the ordinary was soon known. But the evident intention of their leaders was to

press with the land force down the coast, taking possession of the seaports from the rear; countermining the harbours in order to allow the approach of the smaller craft, and a safe entrance for the fleet, that would act in combination with the army. The city of Portland, with its wide and open harbour, was one of the coveted points of attack. But great bodies move slowly. For a long time the British delayed, preparing for the anticipated struggle. When they threw forward their advance, they were surprised at the lack of resistance. Ten days after the great army was in motion, the foremost divisions found themselves on the east bank of the Penobscot, holding a line from Milford to Bucksport.

The army of the United States withdrew from the west bank and fell back slowly, leaving small guards at Frankfort, Hampden, Bangor, and Orino. The bridges across the river had been destroyed, but the English preparations for repairing them and for building pontoons were complete. With seemingly little difficulty they shelled the Americans out of the slender line of fortifications, and in two weeks had crossed most of their force into Penobscot County. They marched south toward Belfast, following the line of the river. The American outposts had now withdrawn beyond the Kennebec. Bangor with its stores had fallen into the British possession without a defence!

Again the public and the press were up in arms. Was the enemy, unmolested, to be allowed to continue his victorious career? Where was the boasted Yankee valour? The big English fleet was off Penobscot Bay, waiting for the fall of Rockland. The plan of working in conjunction, and thus maintaining a moving base, promised success. But there was much that the invaders did not know.

From a point opposite the city of Bath, stretching through Palermo, Albion, and Troy, to the town of Dixmont, and thence to Newport, the Americans had hastily built a double line of heavy railway. On tremendous flat cars were placed movable houses, connected like trolleys with great cables running overhead. From the big manufactories other cables led to this main line, and connections were established from all directions. The army fell back to the line of the new railway, and halted in the rear of it. Rockland was in turn abandoned, and for a week longer the invading force was busy making ready for the entrance of the fleet.

One day, without warning, the Penobscot rose and swept the remaining bridges built by the British out of existence. The phenomenon was apparently hard to explain; there had been no great downfall of rain, and the river had subsided almost as quickly as it had risen. But the cutting

of the dams and the draining of a few large lakes were sufficient explanation. The English found themselves now obliged to press ahead, or depend upon the vessels, if it should be found necessary to abandon the enterprise. The whole force by this time was well down on the peninsula, enclosed between the Penobscot and the Kennebec. To the south was the Atlantic, the coast-line broken by numerous shoals, islands, and inlets, and, stretching in a semicircle from east to north, was the enfilading line of the strange railway. Wonderful to relate, the British scouts had never advanced nearer than to within eight or ten miles of it. There had been numerous small skirmishes with the outposts, and the long line of freshly thrown-up earth had been taken for fortifications and so reported to the commanding English general.

As had been proved in the only fighting that could have been called modern war, the battles along the Yalu and on the plains of Manchuria and in that long-remembered campaign of the English against the Boers in South Africa, accurate scouting on the front of a prepared and well-informed enemy's line was a thing of the past No one knew if behind that long line of earth works lay an immense army or a handful of men Only a reconnaissance in force or a frontal attack could determine. Even the dirigible balloon

that might take advantage of the fine weather and light winds, or the photographing kites, could determine little, owing to the heavily wooded character of the country. But one thing rejoiced the war department in London — the invasion of Maine had stopped a threatened attack upon Quebec. The American troops were being withdrawn from Canada.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE INVADERS

COLONEL LORD MONTAGUE of the Grenadier Guards had returned from a visit to headquarters. He had had a long talk with his friend, General Trevelyan, and had found, much to his delight, a letter that had just arrived on the despatch-boat from Halifax. It was from his wife, and, odd to relate, although it bore home news, it contained little reference to the war. But at the end there was a strange paragraph, over which Montague puzzled for some time. "I am compelled to write to you," Lady Montague continued, "of a strange dream I had the other night, dear Basil. Perhaps it was brought on by thinking of the awful ending of the battle off the Capes of the Delaware. I dreamed that the King himself drove down Piccadilly on the top of a bus, sitting beside the driver," — Lord Montague smiled to himself and pictured his Majesty in such an exalted position, — "and the King announced at every corner: 'The army is destroyed! They should not have gone near the guns! They should have depended on the sword and bayonet!' Wasn't it

strange? But somehow I hope that you will keep away from the guns, and that you will come back to me, when this dreadful, awful war is over, safe and sound. O dearest, my eyes are so red, and I sleep so little!"

As Lord Montague finished reading, his own eyes suffused; and as he sat there thinking, the sentry outside came to a present arms, and some one hailed the colonel cheerfully.

"Come in," called the colonel, rising.

A young officer entered the little tent.

"All alone?" he laughed. "Glad you're not very busy. Here's something that will amuse you." He held something above his head. "Look what one of the men picked up in the woods, some miles on," and with that he extended a rough pine shingle. On it was scrolled in lead pencil the following lines of doggerel: —

> "We're forced to end this foolish strife,
> Advance no further on your life;
> Take warning by this timely 'pome,'
> Throw down your guns and go back home."

"The ubiquitous American humorist," laughed the colonel. "I say, Reggie, where did you find it?"

"One of the scouts saw it nailed to a tree not very far from the line of our intrenchments. When do we begin the attack?"

"The day after to-morrow, beyond all doubt," the colonel replied. "The advance goes out to-night, and the big guns follow to-morrow. Thank Heaven that we have proved our artillery is better than theirs."

"And our rifles, too," suggested Major Townley. "The added range and the noiselessness give us a great advantage. But, do you know, I think these beggars are up to something. Why they haven't attacked us, is more than I can make out."

"Nor I," returned the colonel. "I wish the devil we could take the advice of that 'pome,' all except about throwing down the guns. I'm sick of this confounded affair, anyhow."

"You know if we are kept out here much longer we shall miss all the shooting," the major grumbled.

"We'll get plenty of shooting before we've finished," Lord Montague returned.

"But I say, rather nice people they are,—I mean those we've met so far, and they don't seem to be afraid of us a bit; but they drive shrewd enough bargains," went on Major Townley. "Do you remember what we paid for those cheeses? They reminded me of home. Well, we mustn't forget that this is New England, must we?"

"Yes, that's the worst of it," the colonel replied. "Oh, by the way, your battalion will be

on outpost duty to-night. I hear the K. O. S. B.'s pushed forward with a company of R. E. sappers, and threw up some earthworks just this side of that little stream where the meadow begins."

"You mean where we rode yesterday?"

"Yes, that's the place. You will relieve them at sunset this evening. By the way, better be starting soon."

"Very good, sir."

The careless tone of the conversation had ceased as soon as the element of a military order had entered into it.

The major left the tent and paused outside in the road. He looked out across the smiling valley. Except for the presence of the army, the innumerable little tents and lines of horses and parked guns, it was very peaceful and beautiful — much like "home," in fact. The old stone walls and the neat little farmhouses gave an inhabited air of age and respectability to the landscape. And these people spoke his own language; they even used English terms and expressions of the Elizabethan period — words almost extinct in modern English. It was perplexing at times to find Americanisms dating back to Shakespeare.

"'We're going to end this foolish strife,'" the major read the doggerel over to himself, screwing his monocle into his eye-pit. "My word, old chap, I wish you would," he said aloud, as if

addressing the unknown rhymster. He heaved a long sigh, made a vicious swing with his riding-stick at the blackberry bushes, and started down the road.

Lord Montague, left alone, picked up a pen and began a letter to his wife. He wished it to be cheerful; but the day before a big battle is not the time in which one's mind works in easy channels. Humour or playfulness, under the circumstances, sounds harsh and forced. He began several times as if he was engaged on a happy-go-lucky trip of amusing adventure, but it did not sound spontaneous. Then he fell back upon the scenery; but that would not do at all, so he tore the pages up.

"Dearest," he wrote, "if anything happens to me," but that was worse than the others, so he gave up entirely. He would wait until "after," if there was to be any "after," and he closed the little portable writing-desk. In order to change his frame of mind he changed his uniform, and in a few minutes stepped outside the tent. Some men were standing in the roadway, talking excitedly. Among them was his servant.

"Tubbs," called the colonel.

"Yes, my lord."

"Fetch my horse. What are you making such a row about down there?"

"Nothink much, my lord. But this 'ere ser-

geant 'e says as 'ow 'e's just been 'earing explosions, or somethink like a volley, your lordship. No one else 'eard anythink. 'E's got ears, 'e 'as."

Tubbs was a privileged character and often volunteered his opinions unmolested. But the colonel was thinking; somehow it seemed to him that he had heard something like a very distant volley himself a few minutes before.

"Hurry with my horse, Tubbs." He spoke quietly. "I'm going out for half an hour, and I wish to be back before dark."

The man started off quickly, leaving the colonel standing there, thrashing his boots with his riding-whip. All at once he looked up.

Along the deep-rutted road that led south into the woodland came a man on horseback, riding furiously. The horse's hoofs beat a thunderous tattoo over the wooden bridge across the little trout stream. Behind him floated a trailing cloud of dust; the rider was urging on the tired beast with whip and spur.

CHAPTER XIX

THE QUANDARY

THE assistant editor already had knocked twice at the entrance to Whalen's private office. He waited a minute; then, as there was no reply, he took a pass key from his pocket, entered quietly, and closed the great door behind him. The room was apparently empty; but in order to make sure he walked over to the fireplace and looked behind the great leather screen. No one was there. The editor's desk, usually littered with piles of manuscript and proof, was as bare as a well-swept hearth. Stannard threw down the large bundle of papers he was carrying, with a smothered oath.

"Must have known I was coming," he grumbled; "what's come over him?" He walked to the window and looked down at the street far below him. A regiment was passing, the drums beating a perfunctory rhythm for the marching feet. But marching regiments were an old story by this time, and the people at the corners hardly turned their heads to watch them go.

Stannard turned from the window and approached the editor's desk again. Quickly he tried one of the drawers on the left-hand side, and then another, and a third. All were locked. He swore softly beneath his breath. Then he gave a bitter little laugh.

"A nice time to turn squeamish," he said, taking out a big bunch of keys. Choosing one, he carefully inserted it in the lock of the top drawer. As he did so the bell of the telephone at his elbow rang, quick and sharp. Stannard started like a burglar who had unwittingly touched the spring of an alarm-clock. He caught his breath, laughed nervously, and once more inserted the key in the lock.

The telephone rang immediately. It was a bit uncanny. Again he tried it, and the bell trilled as before.

"Damn the thing," he said aloud, putting the keys back in his pocket.

But now the telephone began a long and insistent calling. It was Whalen's private wire, not the one for public service. And, so far as the assistant knew, no one had ever used it but the editor himself. Stannard hesitated a moment and then picked up the receiver.

"Hullo, who is it?" he asked softly; and, as soon as he had spoken, he almost dropped the instrument from his hand. His face flushed and

then paled. His brow wrinkled in perplexed anger.

"Yes, 'tis I," he said, with almost a stammer of embarrassed hesitation. "I — er — just happened to be here when the bell rang. Yes — See here, Whalen, you're making the mistake of your life! Why do you want to cut that article out? I tell you — No, of course I don't intend to use it unless you say so. But see here, no other paper has got all the details, and it would be a great beat. We've got hold of the great secret. Besides, it would accomplish just what we want. It would prolong this business if we told of it before they tried it, and — oh, well, if you don't care to talk about it, all right. Where are you? — I asked 'Where are you?' Washington! Have you seen Buhler or Bodkin? Oh, they are in New York, are they? I say, Whalen, are you listening?"

There came no reply from the other end of the wire.

The assistant editor hung up the receiver with a bang.

Many times before had Whalen proved too much for him. Sometimes his admiration and his fear of his superior had been mingled with a feeling of bitter hatred. Whalen had never allowed himself to be thoroughly understood; in fact, it was almost impossible to understand him

at all. Why under the sun he should now have made such a sudden change of front, was more than Stannard could understand.

There, before him, carefully written, was the plan and scope of the newly completed railway. There was the detailed account that explained the meaning of the great doings along the watershed of the Kennebec. The newest invention of the mysterious Mr. Westland was explained. In his circumstantial and sensational manner Stannard had the whole on paper. Warning was practically given to the enemy, secrets were freely exposed that would have been impossible for even the best-informed British spies to get hold of. Indeed, there was no doubt of the fact that the publication of the article in question would have created an effect. Owing to the exigencies of war, it might have resulted in some unexpected action on the part of the Government. The authorities might even exercise the extreme privilege of the strict censorship that had been lately established, and close up the paper. But this was rather a doubtful anticipation, and Stannard knew Whalen well enough to feel sure that it was not the fear of such a contingency that held him from publishing the information that, at great risk and expense, the assistant editor had obtained.

There was "a nigger in the woodpile somewhere"; there was something behind Whalen's

policy; and Stannard was chagrined and irritated that he had not been let into the secret. Not only was he irritated, but there was a sensation of deep disappointment and personal loss; for the unravelling of the secret had been the greatest bit of newspaper work of his career. He had, with Whalen's acquiescence, taken a trip up into the Maine woods, and had seen for himself what was going forward. Although the approaches to the huge dynamo stations were jealously guarded, Stannard had been able to secure admission. As he numbered among his various gifts that of a peculiarly receptive mind and an accurate memory, without exciting suspicion he had carried away enough knowledge to enable him, putting different things together, to fill in many blanks by guesswork, and he had guessed well.

There was very little of the general plan that was not within the grasp of his understanding; and the information that he had obtained was worth, from a pecuniary standpoint alone, probably more than enough to render him independent for the rest of his life, if he chose to dispose of it by making a bargain with the British Intelligence Department. But this much he knew — it was safer to see it in print, and yet to keep the fact rather dark that he was responsible for its appearance.

And now when the work was all done Whalen

would have none of it; not a line was to be allowed even to be set up in the composing room. More than that, the carefully compiled notes and data from which he had worked up the completed article were in Whalen's possession; the editor had demanded of him, the night before, that he should produce all the material and place it in his, Whalen's, hands for safe-keeping.

It might seem that in holding back the news so long from the press at large the impossible had been accomplished; but there were reasons. Despite the long-exercised liberty that had been allowed to the newspapers, and in which they had gloried unmolested for so many years, there had been a strict watch kept over the publication of such alleged news matter as might pertain to the movements of troops or the secret information of the national Information Bureau. Whether or not it had the power, the department at Washington had usurped the prerogative and had used it to such purpose that, despite the threats and complaints that at first had emanated from the leaders of the newspaper world, they had, in the end, accepted the caution and had behaved in the main with astonishing and unexpected dignity and circumspection. Even *The Voice* and *The Verdict* fell into line. Whalen, the ever fearless free-thinker and free speaker, had come under the spell of the implied "Thou shalt not,"

and apparently had bowed before the threatening finger of the law. But the acquiescence of the press had not been more astounding than the complete conversion of the reading public to the necessity for this surveillance of the centres from which most important information might have found its way into the hands of the enemy.

So far as the syndicate was concerned, it occupied a position apart, Stannard reasoned, Buhler and Bodkin were stockholders, and although their position was somewhat ambiguous, by all rights they should have something to say about the management of the paper. Yet, for all that he knew, they had remained silent. True, they were in no way able to insist upon any demands they might make; and they must have been more or less worried owing to the fact that they had received, Whalen had said, an intimation that they had better "lie low for a time." Buhler, Stannard had found out by what he considered a clever bit of detective work, played the clarinet in the orchestra of a Bowery theatre at night, and gave music lessons during the daytime. Once the musician, if he was of a suspicious nature, must have feared that his real identity had been discovered, for Stannard had followed him for a day, closely enough to alarm any conspirator. His alleged confrère, Bodkin, whom the assistant editor believed

he had discovered, kept a little cobbler's shop in Second Avenue. If not actually responsible, Stannard believed these men to have been great factors in producing the present unpardonable war. During its progress, he supposed, they had watched developments with complex feelings, in which the one of triumph must have been predominant; but now (and Stannard smiled at the thought) they must be nonplussed at the condition of affairs. Any insistence upon the rights of majority stockholders would have landed them, if too vehement, in the hands of the police — a happening that might bring about disagreeable consequences; there was nothing for them to do but to grumble to themselves. Stannard could imagine them preparing cipher explanations for their masters at home. How clever he had been to find out who they were!

But to leave this long digression, and return to Whalen's private office. Stannard had paused there a long time. Twice he had taken out the keys again and had approached the desk. That one of them unlocked the drawer that contained Whalen's private papers, the assistant had found out. But owing to the mysterious connection that seemed to exist between the metal lock and the telephone, or perhaps to a sudden awakening of conscience or fear, most probably the latter, he did not attempt to unlock the drawer. Irritated

and angered at Whalen's unaccountable attitude, he resolved, at last, upon a course of action that would render him at least independent of the editor's watchful eye. So far as he knew, Whalen had spoken the truth when he stated he had never given the conspirators any more information than that which was printed in the daily issues of the paper, and he was not at all certain if his chief had gone so far as to place himself in a position where he might be amenable to the law. High treason in a republic has a vague and indefinite meaning; but its results and its interpretations might be concise and definite enough, and the military authorities had proved that they disdained precedent.

Stannard was going over a great deal of this in his mind as he paced up and down the soft-carpeted floor. At last he came to a decision. Quickly he walked to the door, and fixing the spring bolt so as to lock behind him, he went out into the hallway and down to his own apartment.

A few minutes later a little, obscure music teacher on the Bowery was interrupted in a lesson he was giving to a pupil in the gentle art of playing the clarinet by a message that his presence was desired by the business manager of a certain newspaper, in the columns of which he had a few lines of advertising; and a cobbling individual, with a long black beard, was called from his bench

by news of the same import. In half an hour they were on their way to the *Voice* offices.

It happened that at the same moment they turned from the street and entered the ground floor. Just as they were stepping into the lift, whom should they meet but Stannard, who, with his usual air of hurry, had followed them in from the vestibule, as if returning from his luncheon.

Stannard had never spoken a word with either. His knowledge of the circumstances connected with their residence in the city came, first, from the editor's own lips, and secondly, from the perusal of the advertising columns of the paper, where innocently enough he had stumbled on to their names. But he could find no incriminating documents in the secret compartment of the editor's private drawer, although he had searched thoroughly.

Whalen had been clever enough not to commit himself upon paper,—that Stannard knew well enough.

The three men stepped out from the lift at the same floor, the car glided out of sight above their heads on its upward journey, and Stannard turned quickly.

In a low and what he intended to be a mysterious whisper he addressed them both, although apparently neither had knowledge of the other's name or business.

"Gentlemen," he said, "will you step into Mr. Whalen's private office?"

Each looked at him with blank astonishment. Neither replied.

Stannard repeated the invitation.

The blond-bearded German shook his head slowly. A smile formed itself on his heavy lips.

"It is som meestak," he said; "you have meestak me."

The man with the heavy black beard passed by, as if he had observed nothing, heading for the office of the advertising manager at the end of the corridor.

It was an embarrassing moment for Stannard. He knew, he firmly believed, that this innocent-looking German musician, who beamed upon him out of his wide blue eyes, and the swarthy Slav, with the dirty finger-nails, who was shuffling up the corridor in his broken shoes, were mysterious and important people. Stannard thought that despite the innocent expression of the wide blue eyes, in their owner's heart had risen a sudden fear, and he believed that the possessor of the broken shoes and the shuffling gait was quivering with fright and with difficulty keeping himself from making a sudden bolt for it.

Stannard was thoroughly disturbed. He believed he knew, as well as he knew his own name, who these men were, and what they were doing,

and yet not an iota of evidence could he have brought against them—not a line of proof, not a written word! There was only the story that he had discussed with Whalen when no one else was nigh to make record or bear witness.

The assistant editor made choice of a bold step. To reach the advertising department it was necessary for the Russian to pass by the door of the private office. In half a dozen hurried strides Stannard had caught up with him and passed him. The black-bearded man had not hastened in his shuffle, but his hand seemed to search beneath his ragged, long-tailed coat with a swifter movement than the assistant thought had been necessary to draw forth subsequently the soiled red handkerchief. He gave a quick sideway glance at Stannard, who was unlocking the door to the private room with his pass key. An instant later the assistant editor had thrown the door wide open, and with a gesture was inviting the ragged cobbler to enter.

Without hesitation the German now walked forward, Stannard pointed with an unmistakable gesture of command, and without speaking both men passed before him and entered the room. Stannard closed the door.

"You know me, gentlemen," he said, not asking a question, but making the statement firmly, "and you know my position here. Mr. Whalen is away;

but there is a matter of great importance that we must consider. Some information has been received — information that *I* have gathered." He paused. It was like a situation in a dream — both men still looked at him stolidly and spoke not a word.

"Oh, come, come," he said, bolstering up his courage with an attempt at bluster, "don't stand there like two fools. This is a matter of importance. Here, I can prove it to you. Here are the plans of the American army. Here, I tell you, I have proof that will convince you that you can trust me. If Mr. Whalen himself were here, he could not treat with you with more knowledge of the whole affair than I." He walked toward the desk, and paused suddenly as if paralyzed. The papers he had left there were gone.

There came a quick, sharp laugh. From behind the tall screen that sheltered the chimney corner stepped the editor himself.

"Hullo, Stannard," he said, "I've been waiting for you. Who are your friends?"

The assistant could hardly speak. His face was livid.

"Damn it all, Whalen," he said, "what are you up to?"

"I might repeat that question, but I won't. I'll only repeat the one I asked before, — 'Who are your friends?'"

"You can answer that yourself," blustered Stannard, angrily. "Enough of this ridiculous bluffing."

He turned to the two men standing there apparently in embarrassed astonishment.

"You know these men," he said, pointing from Whalen to the others with a quivering forefinger.

"Do I know you? Do you know me?" asked the editor, politely bowing.

The German shook his head. The Russian, who was nervously fingering his large red handkerchief, did not reply and looked anxiously toward the door.

"They don't seem to know much of anything," continued Whalen, smiling. "What do you want to do with them? If you have finished asking questions, we might let them go."

As he spoke he walked over to the door and opened it. With a movement of his open hand he politely but firmly indicated to both of the foreign-born citizens that their presence was no longer necessary; and at the same time, despite the fact that Stannard's eyes were on him, the editor deliberately touched his forehead with his forefinger as if to initiate them both into a secret that would explain, in a measure, an apparently unexplainable situation.

With evident relief and not a little embarrassment the cobbler and the musician left the room.

The editor and his assistant were left there

looking at one another in silence, but the smile had faded from Whalen's face. A dangerous light shone in his steely-gray eye.

"Well?" he said shortly.

"Those men are Buhler and Bodkin," said Stannard, almost panting.

"Yes?" replied the editor. "Perhaps those are their names. I got them out of the list of advertisers. You will find them in the B's."

"Who are they?"

"One is a musician over in the Bowery, and the other a cobbler, I believe, on Second Avenue."

"They paid you forty millions of dollars less than six months ago."

"Oh, did they?" said Whalen. "Where is it? Did you see them give it to me?"

Stannard did not reply.

"I returned very quickly, didn't I?" Whalen went on. "It's but a step now from Washington here. I told you I was with Mr. Crantz and the ex-President — so I was. They're in the room upstairs. Every time you put your key into the lock of my private drawer, you called me up on the telephone. — Stannard, you are the cleverest journalist, of a certain kind, in the world. The only trouble is, and something I've long suspected, you are not quite straight, Stannard."

"What are you going to do about it?" the assistant asked curtly. "What does all this mean?"

"It means a change in the policy of the paper," replied the editor, "and I wanted to be sure that you would agree in it. There are one or two editorials that you might write in your own inimitable way if I gave you the idea. You had better forget all about that information the British would like to have." The editor smiled as he turned.

"What are you after?" Stannard inquired falteringly.

"Oh, a little more power — a little further action, maybe. It's all in the little game of life I like to play. We've done a lot to bring this war about,—which it might be a hard matter to prove, by the way,—and now we're going to stop it, or help to, if we can." Whalen paused a moment and smiled. "You can open that drawer if you like — it's empty. But don't leave, Stannard, until I give you the gist of the leader for to-morrow. You know the Force will be turned on to-morrow night about seven — quite a success it will be, if all is true. Better keep it dark for a time until we know, however. — Oh, by the way, you won't object to having an assistant at your elbow for a few days, will you? Nice chap, a deputy United States marshal, — let's see — I've forgotten his name,— but he won't disturb you — if — oh, well, as long as you don't make him uneasy about whom you write to, or whom you talk with."

CHAPTER XX

THE AFFAIR IN THE MEADOWS

At the edge of the deep shadow thrown by the great pines, stretched a long line of shallow intrenchments, the furthermost outpost of the British army of invasion. In the sandy hollows lay a score or more of infantrymen, part of a guard's regiment, talking together in low voices. Some of them had already spread their blankets for the night. Back in the woods, out of sight, little fires were burning, and the coffee was brewing for the evening meal.

A few men had opened their haversacks, and a tall young fellow, with thin sandy hair, was digging with his knife at a tin of Australian mutton. After the fashion of Tommy they were thinking of the present moment, and not of the morrow.

"I sye, Bill," said one, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, "I'm fed up on this 'ere watchin' business. I'd like to get a little run for my money. Here we've been in this blessed country goin' on a month, and no foightin'. Nothin' but up all night at sentry-go and lyin' round all day. I'm gettin' out of condition with it."

"You'll get enough of foightin' before you're done," observed the man with the tin. "And you'll get fed up on that. Tor blime me, by this time to-morrow you'll be wishin' for 'ome, sweet 'ome.' We hadvance at diylight. The M. I. was moved up this hafternoon and the guns ain't far be'ind 'em. You'll get a run for your money, old cocky, and you'd better 'ave a care that you don't maike a little run for the rear of the firin' line. Now, when I was in Hafrica —"

"You was in Hafrica!"

"Well, if I wasn't, my brother was, and 'e told me the bravest man 'e ever see was so funky when it came to talkin' of foightin' that he'd go off and 'ide his bloomin' 'ead; but when it caime to doin' of it, he was hup with the first of 'em. You don't know what you're goin' to do. It's your officers and your bloomin' legs as taikes you, and not your talkin' of it."

"'Tention," observed a sergeant, suddenly, who had been sitting apart. "Here comes the capting."

Down a little pathway, that led through the pines, strolled a tall officer with his field-glasses in his hand, and at his elbow a young, slightly built lad of twenty, in a subaltern's uniform.

"Sergeant," said the captain, in a half-drawl, "I want a volunteer."

"Yes, sir," said the sergeant. "For what, sir?"

"To climb a tree," returned the captain, level-

ling his glass across the green sweep of meadow that stretched for two miles or more to the edge of the farther wood. "Seems to me I saw something moving over there."

"Cossack post out there, sir,—one of ours. Some of the M. I. crossed the open 'alf an hour ago. No one fired at them, sir."

"I don't mean there," returned the officer, "but two miles farther on, where the river bends in toward us. You can just get a glimpse of the Yankee intrenchments. Seemed to me they were moving a balloon, or—er—something about."

The sergeant had turned to the men, who had risen to their feet.

"'Ere, you," he said, "oo can climb a tree?"

All stepped forward, even a short, fat, butcher's boy-looking chap, who prefaced the offer of his assistance with, "I'm a regular climber, sergeant."

Even the captain joined in the laugh that followed, and then, to quell the hilarity, he picked out none other than the fellow who was eager for the "foightin'."

"Up with you," he said, "and take my glasses. See if you can't get a look over the top of those trees before the sun goes down altogether."

The man, flushed with pride at being the one chosen, slung the strap over his shoulder, and dis-

daining to remove his tunic commenced to swarm up the nearest pine tree. But it was a long way to the branches, and before he was halfway up his good intentions to attempt the rest of the distance were only illustrated by a few feeble kicks and much spitting of bark that had fallen into his mouth and eyes. The whole command was hesitating between a desire to laugh or to cheer — it didn't know which. The fat boy, in his eagerness to be the next called upon, began to remove his coat and roll up his sleeves.

The subaltern loosened his belt. "Better let me try it," he said quietly. And as he spoke, with much scraping and tearing of khaki trousers, the first volunteer slid to the ground and rolled over upon his back.

"Confound the clumsy beggar," said the captain, with a laugh, "I don't care about his neck; but if he's broken those glasses, he'll be sorry for it."

"Better let me, sir," said the subaltern again.

"Oh, very well," murmured the captain, picking up his uninjured glasses with a sigh of relief, disdaining to notice the smothered and profuse explanations of the discomfited climber, who was rubbing hip and elbow.

Taking a long breath, the subaltern began his upward journey. He had not gone out for rooks' nests as a schoolboy for nothing, nor had he

swung himself about the dizzy heights of the peaks of Switzerland without cultivating the muscles of his legs and back and arms.

There was almost a murmur of admiration from the company as he went up the trunk of the tree like a Sea Islander after cocoanuts, and when he reached the lower branches he swung himself up into them with the grace of a trapeze performer. Even the captain could not repress a smile of congratulation.

"Well done, Carrington," he said; "you'll get yourself mentioned in despatches if you keep on."

It was with difficulty that the men this time repressed themselves. If it had not been for the first sergeant's rough admonition, they would have cheered for a certainty.

A little shower of bark and twigs showed that the young officer was still successfully pursuing his upward career.

In two or three minutes a voice came from the sky.

"Hullo, below there, sir!"

"Hullo! What do you see?"

"Seems to be a house or something over there. Sure it wasn't there last night. By gad, it's on wheels or something, for it's moving. Yes, there she goes again."

The subaltern, perched on the topmost branches, had just managed to bring the object within the

range of the powerful binoculars when, with an even and mysterious movement, it slid out of sight sideways, and was hidden behind the thick branches of the distant pine trees. He could trace a line of earthworks, and saw that they crossed a bend of the river and stretched away to westward, circling about the foot of a sloping wooded hill.

For four or five days there had been strong westerly winds, but now it was calm and still. A jet of steam or smoke rose from the right, straight into the air, some six or seven miles away.

"Fine weather for the balloons," observed the subaltern to himself, sweeping his glass around him. "I wonder why—" but the end of the sentence never came. Something quite near attracted his attention. He saw distinctly, in the fading light, a man come out of the underbrush at the beginning of the woods, where the Cossack post was sheltered, and with every evidence of haste drag after him a somewhat reluctant horse that had been nibbling at the bushes. Just as the man swung himself into the saddle there came a shot, and then another. Two or three little puffs of smoke broke out from the bend of the river bank.

"Black powder, by Harry!" exclaimed the subaltern. "Hullo, below there! They're firing on the outpost. Here they come back, sir, across the meadow."

It was just light enough to see four or five other men emerge from the woods, as the first had done, and, mounting hastily, come on at a gallop. Behind them trailed two riderless horses, their reins loose and flying, the stirrups swinging from side to side. All at once there came a quick flash from the galloping party, and instantly from beneath the tree in which the subaltern was perched came the crash of a great volley.

He had heard no order, and never in rifle practice or firing by company had he heard anything so quick and sharp as that sudden and simultaneous detonation of rifle fire. It startled him so that he almost lost his balance; he only saved himself from falling by a quick grasp at the nearest branch.

"Hullo, down there!" he cried, peering through the massive shadow. "Hullo! hullo!"

There came no reply.

Again he called.

No answer.

The glasses dropped from his frightened fingers; his heart began pumping the blood so swiftly to his head that he grew dizzy. Once more he tried to frame the question. What could it mean? What awful thing had taken place? And then, as he reached down his foot for the branch below him, he stopped, hanging in mid-air. Surely that was a groan! And now his voice came to him.

"What's happened there below?" He almost shrieked the words, this time shrilly like a frightened child.

"Oh, for God's sake, sir, come down!" replied a voice. "Come down — oh, God!"

How the subaltern reached the ground he could hardly have told. There seemed to be a rush of scraping limbs and branches; he turned almost over, falling from one to another, like a wounded bird from a tree-top, and at last with the breath almost out of his body, he made a drop of it the full twenty feet into the soft bed of pine-needles. Quickly he rose to his feet and staggered back, as if dealt a blow between the eyes. There, crawling toward him, was the wreck of a human being — the fat boy. Blood ran from his face and one of his arms was loose and useless from the elbow, a leg was the same from just above the ankle. He was creeping on his knees.

"God, sir," he moaned, "we're killed, all killed! The captain and all. Blowed up, sir. I was reaching for my belt when it goes off in my hand just like a squib, sir. They're all cut to pieces, like they was sawed in two. For the love of — what's happened, sir? What —" He tried to rise, but pitched forward on his face; suddenly his babbling ceased.

The subaltern took three or four steps forward and his head swam as if he was about to swoon.

No doubt about it. Dead, all *dead!* There they lay in the narrow trench—huddled and blackened and bloody bundles of a ragged uniform. Dead, all dead! There was a smell of singed cloth and worse than that. A little apart lay the sergeant and the captain. The subaltern turned his eyes from what was left of the burly frames. He saw one thing that made him bend and look closer. His own revolver and cartridge-belt lay at his feet. He picked the latter up. The canvas and leather pouches were blown to shreds and shoestrings. It was like some dreadful, horrible fantasia of the brain. He went sick at the pit of his stomach. He wondered, for an instant, if he had fallen from the tree and was imagining. But no, here was something moving and living.

A riderless horse crashed through the bushes and halted at sight of him, standing with ears pricked forward and trembling fore legs.

Mechanically the subaltern stepped out and grasped him by the bridle. The horse seemed glad to see him. He stood quite still while Carrington weakly hauled himself up into the saddle.

Once there, with the reins firmly in his hands, he dug his heels into the beast's heaving ribs and tore back along the path, sobbing fearful, nervous sobs of fright and horror.

It was almost a mile to the next outpost, but

before he reached it he met some men coming forward on the double. It was growing so dark that he almost ran into them before he knew it. Suddenly he found himself surrounded by faces, looking at him in surprise and consternation. Some one had grasped the horse by the head. A voice was speaking to him. It dawned upon him that he knew the tones, and the face was Major Townley's.

"What's happened here? Are they coming on? Are they in force?" the major asked hoarsely.

"No, no — Back! back!" the boy cried, speaking almost wildly. "Don't go forward. For the love of God, don't go. They're killed, all killed! Blown up! Blown all to pieces! Look here — look!" He extended the wreck of the cartridge-belt. "Look there," he wailed. "Every cartridge exploded of itself. They're killed, all killed! Where's the colonel — where is the colonel?" he continued.

"Steady, steady," said the major, his voice shaking as he spoke, looking at the singed and torn mass of tow and leather in his hand. "Be calm, speak quick, lad — tell me."

"I can't," the boy replied. "There is no time. Where is the colonel?"

Major Townley still held fast to the horse's bridle. Some of the men who had overheard what

had been going on had turned back to the road. They were whispering and talking among themselves. In another instant the contagion of flight might have pervaded all of them. If once the order to retire was given, there would have been no stopping them. Major Townley came closer to Carrington, his hand rested on the boy's trembling knee.

"Look here, young sir," he said firmly but quietly, and in a tone that claimed attention, "a great deal depends on you. Ride back to Lord Montague. You'll find him at the little white house on the hillside across the stream, a mile beyond the place where you turn into the highway. But before you get to him, remember that you must be calm and cool-headed. Don't be a blubbering ass. Now, off with you!" He turned the horse's head down the path, and Carrington spurred on.

As he looked back over his shoulder he heard the major's voice giving half-laughing orders, and he could see the men forming along the line of bushes, shrouded in the shadows, ingulfed in the growing darkness.

The boy was cool now, but he was riding as if in a point to point. He found the road, swerved to the right and, in a few minutes, clattered over the bridge and was tearing up the hill toward the little white farmhouse.

In the meadows on either hand the men grazing the horses looked at him in astonishment, and as he gained the top of the hill a tall figure strode out to meet him. It was his colonel. With a supreme effort of his tired arms Carrington pulled the runaway down to a walk.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CORDON

As Colonel Lord Montague listened, his eyes searching the subaltern's still excited face, there came to him the peculiar words in the letter from his wife, "Don't go near the guns." They had reminded him of the first advice of people who fear drowning, "not to go near the water"; but now there seemed to be a latent meaning behind the warning. Could she have received a word or a hint from friends or relatives in America, Montague wondered. If the information had been very accurate, the warning had certainly been ambiguous to a degree; but then he could not stop to reason over it, there was much else to do. The general must be informed. The advance movement must be checked before the guns came into the zone of the murderous and mysterious influence; or else, if what he had heard was true, Heaven knew what might happen.

Carrington had been a protégé of the colonel's. He knew his family well. The boy was honest and straightforward, and his recital

sounded with a ring of truthfulness. Besides, there was the cartridge-belt and the horse; and now Lord Montague noticed for the first time that the poor beast's flanks and saddle were dripping red.

Just at this moment his servant came running up from the lines, leading his own charger. The boy had not dismounted, there seemed to be a mile or two yet left in his tired steed; besides, the latter's condition was *prima facie* evidence that something out of the usual had taken place. The general was at the big house on the hill only a mile or two up the road, so jumping into the saddle he called to the subaltern to follow him, and both galloped on.

Five minutes later they were standing before Field-Marshal Lord Trevelyan, and there, for the third time in half an hour, young Carrington told his story. The commander-in-chief listened attentively. Compressed lips and tightly clasped hands showed the intensity of his feeling. He asked few questions. Carrington was cool now; he replied directly and sensibly. The intense pallor of his face and the condition of his disordered apparel showed the strain he had passed through. At last he finished.

"Montague," said Lord Trevelyan, slowly, "we must keep this from the army, at least for some time, until we talk it over in council. We will

stop the forward movement at once, and yet something must be done. If possible, the enemy must not be allowed to find out the success of their devilish witchcraft. Those trenches must be reoccupied at once."

"Very good, sir," the colonel replied, saluting. "I am ready to go. My men will follow me."

Carrington stepped forward and laid his hand on his colonel's arm.

"No, no, sir, don't," he faltered in a hoarse whisper.

The general, overhearing, looked at him coldly.

"You will guide Lord Montague to the spot, sir," he said.

"Very good, sir." All fear left the boy's face as he replied, his fingers lifting to his forehead.

The field-marshal continued, speaking as if he were giving merely instructions for some perfunctory scheme of regimental exercise.

"You will leave all ammunition behind you, Colonel, and even empty the magazines. Let each man carry one shot in the chamber of his rifle, and march with arms at shoulder; but you must go at once."

An instant later Lord Montague and the subaltern, the latter astride of a fresh horse, were galloping back to the guards' headquarters, which were on the foremost line of the main division.

Orderlies and galloping aides were now tearing

in all directions; batteries and regiments that had been moving southward were stopped where they were; but in a long line the Grenadiers moved down the road through the gathering darkness at a quick step. Despite the strict orders there was no little whispering in the ranks. The men could not understand why they should be sent forward without their usual, and sometimes galling, load of ammunition; but as curiosity is a restricted indulgence of the British soldier, they asked no questions of their officers. If they had, the latter themselves could not have replied to them.

In less than an hour they came upon Major Townley's battalion halted in the wood road. It was a clear night and now there was a moon almost at the full, rising above the eastern hills. As it sailed higher and higher into the sky the soft light filtered through the leaves of the ghostly silver birches and pierced the dark cathedral-like arches of the mighty pines.

Major Townley and two of his officers had beckoned the colonel and his aides aside. They spoke in whispers, standing apart from the men. The major had been forward to the position held by the outpost. He had found it all as Carrington had represented. The dead men lay there, where they had fallen. It would never do to march the regiment up to occupy the position. It was bad enough as it was. Already a feeling of uneasiness

and suspicion of the unusual permeated the ranks. There was no light-hearted chaffering. No one seemed to take the opportunity of the halt to sit down or rest. They stood almost at attention, but there was a deal of sibilant whispering up and down the lines. The men nearest to the group of officers never took their eyes off them. As the major had told his story he had dissembled not a little; and although his words spoken in a low voice were tense and thrilling, he had flicked the ashes carelessly from his cigarette as he was speaking. But not all the acting in the world could have relieved that little meeting of its note of seriousness. The very carriage of the shoulders of the listening officers, the leaning forward of their heads, their silent attention and stiffened muscles, proclaimed the agitation that each one felt. There was the horror that comes to people in the hour when sudden pestilence walks with them, the feeling that might come to sailors on a deck of a burning powder ship. Any instant, any second, there might take place some dreadful, awful thing. Under that pale, soft moonlight the hand of Death lay on each one, yet there was no flinching, no intentional, outward sign of the giving way of courage. The wild desire, dormant in all of them, to run, to flee, to cast all aside in one mad rush for safety, was quelled and hushed and

hidden. The inheritance of the sense of duty that was theirs, the traditions of their calling and the honour of their regiment, were before their eyes in that soul-trying, almost exasperating moment.

"Townley," said the colonel, quietly, after a pause, "how far off is this — er — place you speak of — where this — er — accident occurred?"

"Not much above a mile, sir. You cross the little stream —"

"Oh, yes, I remember the stream. It's only a short way ahead."

"About half the distance to the trenches, colonel, it runs parallel in this direction almost due east and west."

The major motioned with his arm.

"We'll form on that," replied Lord Montague, shortly. "It'll seem to give the men more of an object than keeping them halted here in the road, and we'll drop back a few sentries in order to see that no one leaves; and then, you, major, myself, and a few others will go on and have a look. Who went with you before?"

"I went alone."

"Rather careless of you, Townley. Might have been captured, you know; but perhaps it was best. Call the men to attention; then march on to the stream."

It was no task at all for the regiment to take up

its position on the north bank of the little brook that worked its way in and out of the big, moss-covered boulders. There was little or no underbrush, and the men took their intervals and lay down on the soft pine-needles. Every rifle, according to orders, stretched out, pointing away in one direction, as if ready to repel an immediate attack. But if they were compelled to fire a volley, the men wondered what would happen. Their pouches and their web cartridge-belts were left behind them miles away. They felt a sense of relief as the order came to fix on their short, spadelike bayonets. But still, influenced by the mystery of the proceedings, no one felt inclined to sleep. They lay there talking in low voices. The colonel, standing in the road with some of his officers, spoke to one of the captains.

"Bagot," he said, "call for Sergeant Crawley. He's a cool-headed old hand. I've known him long and well; was sort of a shikaree to me, years ago, in the Punjab. We can trust him."

Within a few minutes a party of six officers were walking down the road toward the group of huge pines at the edge of the wood where the catastrophe had taken place. Ahead of them, with his piece at the ready, walked a strong, thick-set figure peering to right and left into the bushes, but pressing boldly on. They could see the light now broadening ahead of them into the sweep of the

meadow land. The party halted for a moment. The guide had raised his hand as if in warning, crouching a little and signalling to those that followed to follow his example.

Carrington, who had been walking beside the colonel, and curbing with difficulty his strong desire to lag behind, for he hated to approach the awful spot, started with nerves atingle. Close to him he heard what he thought was something moving amid the branches of a scrub-oak. But, look his hardest, he could see nothing. Nevertheless he distinctly heard the colonel loosen his sword in its scabbard. The rest of the party carried no arms at all, except the major, who swung a stout knob stick by a leather thong.

It was dead silence. Not a sound of bird or beast or insect. Not a breath of wind stirred the leaves of the trees. Each man could feel the beating of his heart; one or two breathed hard as if they had been running. All at once there came to them the sharp staccato whistle of a locomotive, miles and miles away to the south. They had heard it often before, those on outpost, and all knew that the railway that supplied the waiting American army ran out from Portland. But now this whistle was answered by another, and then by a third and fourth; and then up rose a chorus of long-drawn piercing blasts that sounded like a great factory town of giants at high noon.

The distant swelling chorus ran in a circle of sound before them. It stopped shortly, but the echoes seemed to linger, dwindling away shriller and shriller, and yet fainter and more faint, to the west and north, until all was silence as before.

"Damned trying to the nerves, this," remarked one of the kneeling officers to another. "Do you remember an extravagant story by a chap named Wells, entitled 'The War of the Worlds'? That confounded whistling and the echoes remind me of the 'Ulla, ulla,' of the Martians."

"I don't remember anything," replied the other; "but I certainly know one thing, I'm in a pea-green funk, and I'd like to get out of this."

The silence was almost as uncanny as the roaring breath of the far-away whistles. Every one was relieved when the sergeant on ahead suddenly rose and, beckoning them to follow him, stepped out once more. Three or four hundred yards now and they would be at the intrenched outpost. The leader quickened his pace. And then, all at once, the rifle in his hands went off with a quick, stinging detonation, and the bullet went crackling through the tree-tops. The man's superb courage deserted him. He came running back.

"I swear to God, I never touched the trigger, sir. Confound it, there's devils here, — ghosts or summut, — look there!"

A very substantial ghost it was that stepped out from behind the trunk of a big pine — a ghost clad in yellowish green with a soft felt hat and two crossed bronze muskets on its front; and he was not alone; other ghosts were with him; they filled in the road behind. In the hollows of their arms rested long-barrelled Springfield muskets of fifty years before. Big black powder cartridges filled the canvas belts about their waists.

"Gentlemen," said the foremost, in a soft, low voice, "you are our prisoners." He stepped out into the moonlight, and a bright patch rested on his head and shoulders. He was a young man, not above six and twenty, and in one soft-gauntleted hand he held, swinging loosely from him, a great revolver of an antiquated pattern.

Not one of the officers said a word.

The one who had spoken of having been in a "pea-green funk" drew a long breath, whether of relief or sorrow at his fate it might be hard to say. But the colonel stepped forward hastily.

"Taintor," he said, "Jack Taintor, don't you know me?"

"Montague!" exclaimed the young officer, thrusting his pistol into his belt and drawing off his glove. He grasped the colonel by both hands. "This is strange," he said; "who would have —" He stopped suddenly and spoke, lifting his voice in a quick and startling question:

"Have you any arms about you, any of you?" Warning and fear were in his tones.

"No," said the colonel, "we left all behind."

"Thank God for that," the American spoke now in a different tone. "You must not bring cartridges within a quarter of a mile of the line of this forest edge. It would be dangerous — it would be madness to do so."

"But you have yours," the colonel said. "How's that?"

"Black powder — it's *your* ammunition they're after. Ours is safe enough. Montague, for God's sake, don't let any of your army move. As you love the lives of your fellow-men, keep back the big guns and the caissons. Let no one move."

In the interest of hearing the conversation the officers seemed to have forgotten that they were surrounded and were prisoners.

The colonel turned to them.

"I've been very rude. The fortunes of war are strange fortunes; but let me present to you my wife's cousin, Captain Jack Taintor of the —" he paused.

The young man smiled and responded to the implied question.

"Of the 112th New York." He extended his hand to Major Townley, who was biting at his short scrubby mustache, the only one to show the bitterness of his feelings.

"What is the meaning of all this devilish business?" asked the major, showing his bad humour.

"Well, I haven't time to explain everything, and I confess I couldn't; but in a nutshell, you're inside a zone of electrical force, gentlemen — a field of projection or something or other; anyhow, it could be made, as you say, most 'devilish,' and that's what we wish to prevent, if possible. That is what I'm here for."

"What do you intend to do with us?" asked the colonel.

"I have to follow my instructions," replied the captain, "and they are to get in touch with you, even to get captured if necessary. I have only a few men with me, not above twenty. We've been waiting for you."

"But you've taken us," said the colonel.

"Oh, it doesn't much matter, one way or the other," replied the young officer, smiling. "If you'd like to come over to us, we'd be glad to have you; but still I suppose you could put me up for a little while. What we want to do is to open up some line of communication that doesn't have to pass through the war office in London; so if you'll take me back to your commanding officer, or come on, one or two of you, to see ours, the result would be the same. I know it's all very irregular and sounds like bosh, but it's hard common-sense. Believe me."

One of the captains, who had been listening, commenced to snigger. "Well, I call this an odd kind of a war," he laughed.

"It is, rather," replied Captain Taintor; "but better have it odd than awful. Hullo, what's this? Here come some of your men. Keep them back! Keep them back! For God's sake, halt them!" he cried.

Shining in the moonlight down the narrow road were the points of a few broad bayonets.

CHAPTER XXII

THE INTERMISSION

THE handful of American soldiers that had stood silently grouped about the officers made no move at all. Only one of them cocked his rifle with a click of the ponderous hammer; but a word from his captain made him lower it. Lord Montague was almost embarrassed; Major Townley appeared relieved; and the rest wore puzzled looks.

The foremost English soldiers were not more than a hundred yards away when their colonel's voice ordered them to halt. They stood there in the road, looking at the strange group before them in sheer astonishment. It was the first time any of them had seen a single soldier of the enemy's forces; yet here they were, standing face to face within point-blank distance, and no signs of a hostile demonstration. What could it mean?

Captain Taintor spoke with a half-laugh, as if to relieve the awkwardness of the situation.

"Montague," he said, "the tables seem to be turned now. There is little use just now in continuing this interesting tableau. If you will

allow me to send back one of my men with information of what has happened, the rest of us will go with you with great pleasure. I have papers for General — I mean Field-Marshal — Lord Trevelyan that I was instructed to deliver in person."

"Very well, as you say," the colonel replied; "but it is certainly a strange proceeding."

"Confound its rotten strangeness," grumbled Townley. "I can't get the hang of it."

"Well, the hang of it is just this," replied the American, turning to him. "There's no use shedding another drop of blood, if it can be prevented, and I think that your chief may be brought to see things in their proper light. What he intends to do is more than I can answer for; but one or two experiments may determine his course of action. But if the colonel will pardon me," and with this he laid his hand on Montague's sleeve in a familiar and friendly manner, "we're wasting time."

The colonel laughed. "Maybe so," he said; "fall in your men; we will go back to headquarters."

The half score of American troops, with their clumsy old pieces at the shoulder, followed their captain and the colonel through the line of guardsmen and soon crossed the stream where the rest of the regiment lay; for it was only a

company that had gone forward, sent out by the officer left in command in a fit of nervous apprehension as to the fate of his superiors.

What took place at the interview that Captain Taintor held with the British commander-in-chief matters little, so far as conversation and details went. There was no demand for a general surrender; there was no request for the opening of negotiations. The captain's mission and the papers he bore conveyed only a warning that the British forces should advance no farther. The course of action was to be left to them. One thing, however, it was intimated, nay, plainly stated, that it would be easy to prove; namely, the truth of the assertion that the cordon of destruction was drawn about them. Subtle and unseen, but impervious, it hovered on front and flank. In the rear was the open sea, and in the two wide roadsteads were British fleets at anchor. Thither lay their way of escape.

> "Take warning by this timely 'pome,'
> Throw down your guns and go back home."

The epitome of the situation was there. The choice of the methods was to be left to the English themselves. The enforcing of anything like demands, on the part of the American military authorities, might have produced the very thing they most wished to avoid, a conflict — a con-

flict with effects so disastrous that it would assuredly, in the language of the obstinate old Boer who years before had occasioned the Imperial forces so much trouble, "stagger humanity." Already the awful consequences had been made evident. Who would assume the responsibility of making further tests? Certainly those who knew full well the uncontrollable power intrusted to them would not invite it. They groaned to think of using it. The premature publication of the plans might have brought about the awful, inevitable result. The English, stimulated by the fearlessness of their own ignorance of the consequences, or taunted into recklessness by their enemy's tone of boastful assurance, might have attempted to force the Americans' hand, and attacked with a result too dreadful to contemplate. One thing the British general demanded — time. He must communicate with his Government; and more than that, if possible, he must prevent panic and disorder among his troops.

At present there was but one regiment that knew of the situation — the grenadiers; but it was foolish to expect that the secret could long be kept; and when it was known, who could foretell what contagious terror might follow, or what acts of recklessness?

General Trevelyan and his staff debated until the gray of the morning, and then orders were

sent to the various divisions to fall back upon the coast, and by daylight infantry, cavalry, and artillery had been concentrated into a compact camp, stretching from Penobscot Bay in a semi-circle of thirty miles northward to the river.

Captain Taintor and his men had been paroled and had returned to their own army. On their way back they had buried the poor bodies in the slaughter trench.

For the next three days all hands were employed in throwing up earthworks across the lowlands, and guns were mounted upon escarpment and traverse as if in preparation for a siege.

Out in the wooded country a single regiment, the grenadiers, held the post of honour alone. With but a single round apiece they faced the silent enemy.

The action of the war office in London, then and subsequently, brought forth varied and diverse opinions. The English people at large, though by this time tired of the war, and appalled at the extravagant bill of expenses that they soon might have to pay, were yet disappointed and chagrined at the sudden halt in the victorious progress of their army down the American coast. Surrender on any terms, the Government did not think of or countenance for a minute; yet they were powerless — they could neither reply to the demands for the recall of Lord Trevelyan nor

explain their reasons for his actions or his delay. A week went by, productive of no result, apparently, so far as any decision was concerned, but nevertheless filled with doings that determined the inevitable. It was a fact, not a theory, that confronted the British commander-in-chief, and the knowledge of the fact, brought home to him, was enough not only to dishearten him, but almost to unhinge his intellect under the burden of the responsibility. So far as any result that the army under him might accomplish, he realized that he was as impotent and powerless as if his force was on a desert island in the unfrequented wastes of the Pacific.

And the rumours of the cause were growing in the camp. There was scarcely a mess now where the officers did not talk of the Force in whispers.

The great transport fleet was being organized again. Some stated that another point of attack was to be ordered, that the line that confronted Trevelyan's army had been found to be too powerful; and yet in some places it was openly stated that the campaign was to be abandoned, and the invading army would be returned to their native shores.

It was foolishness to expect that the whole situation was not by this time known to the press; it had been scattered broadcast in print for all to read. Ten days after the great retirement, Europe

was aflame with it. Wise men, scientists, and soldiers discussed it. The world's Peace Party was jubilant. War was to end, unless men wished to fight with knives as the mysterious Mr. Westland had intimated.

Shortly after the return of Captain Taintor and his men the United States began to make arrangements for the sending of their own "more or less unwilling guests" across the Canadian frontier. It cannot be said that they had suffered very much in the way of hardships. They had been well fed and well housed; the weather had been propitious for out-door sport; and in places where the isolated prisons had been placed, the prisoners themselves had grown to be quite popular with the inhabitants. A few, under their parole, had taken part in sports and games. The officers — those not exchanged for some of the naval officers — who had recovered slowly from the effects of the day of the poisoned fumes in the naval action were allowed almost full liberty, only being restricted within certain limits and placed upon their honour.

Everybody was looking forward to the peace that soon must come; and as they looked forward, they counted up the cost — what was there to gain? What had been gained? Even the most ultra-jingo could boast of little in the way of glory, and the people at large felt duped and

cheated, and were only as sick as thrifty folk can be at the prospect of throwing good money after bad.

And thus matters stood when the madness came. What inspired it, no one could exactly tell; but history has never yet recorded on its pages so spontaneous and magnificent a movement. Bold to almost criminal recklessness; brave to the very limits of hardihood; no Englishman can read of it or listen to the story without his heart leaping in his breast with pride. Madness it was, perhaps, but it was that spontaneous madness of the almost desperate, and behind it lurked the germ of hope. "It was not to reason why, it was but to do or die." Flodden Field, Cressy, Poictiers, Waterloo, and Balaklava, the mad rushes through the swamps at New Orleans — the blood was there. And like some doings of the desperate, it came nigh to being successful, and that brings us to the recital.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE MADNESS

It was probably the exasperation owing to the loss of some of the transport vessels in the well-remembered tornado in July, and the consequent impossibility of embarking the larger portion of troops, that decided Lord Trevelyan to take the initiative. Or it may have been that the misinformation under which he acted was believed in thoroughly, and that he fully expected to find the line of railway upon which were shifted the movable "projection houses" to be lightly guarded. Maybe, as some afterward declared, the responsibility had so preyed upon him that his judgment was worthless, and that the rash orders emanated from the direction of a weakened intellect. But whether or not, the orders, when they came, were popular. Sixty thousand men, with a night march of twenty miles before them, went out to battle, as the old legionaries of Rome had gone, and as their own ancestors had stepped forth to meet them — their weapons, the old ones of point and sharpened blade.

How the woods swarmed with them when they

started; how the road behind them filled and packed with the eager ones for whom there was no room in the vanguard!

The Dervishes at Omdurman could never have advanced to the day of their ending more cheerfully. The road toward the river along which the railway ran, the main road, that is, was straight and wide. The grenadier guards, still on outpost, had fallen back to within six miles of the British crescent. So quickly had the two divisions which composed the forlorn hope moved, that they reached the guards' position before it was completely dark. Before them, lumbering along, was one of the new armoured traction engines, with guns all loaded. She was to act as pilot for the following force.

After reaching the first destroyed bridge, even with the river low (as it was, owing to the recent drought), the ponderous machine could never have crossed over; but it was never expected that danger signal would be given so soon.

Seven miles exactly from the outer bend of the crescent of intrenchments her guns were fired without the gunners' aid. The Force had given warning — "Farther thou shalt not go" — as distinctly as if a voice had spoken from the cloudless sky. But what mattered it to the onward-pressing men? — they had other arguments than those of gunpowder. Many they knew would die; but once

the river forded, and the Yankee flank turned, they intended to sweep along the pathway of the enemy's engines of destruction and wipe them out, one by one — overrun them by sheer numbers in old boarding-party fashion; and so they marched on, the madness growing within them.

The roads were good and the country fairly open. There was still a moon, and the sky was sprinkled with bright, sparkling stars. They covered the ground rapidly; and just as the gray streaks of dawn were showing, and the birds were beginning to sing, the advance-guard came to the open meadow, and here they halted in the wood.

The approach of the great army had thrown the American forces into consternation. Unharmed, the enemy had been marching for miles through the zone of danger. Picket after picket had fallen back before them. On the north side of the river, where were the first American intrenchments, men with the black powder rifles were gathering. Reënforcements were being hurried across to join them. For hours the great machines had been throwing out the Force, sweeping ceaselessly but uselessly across the country. What had happened, no one could tell. To all appearances the experiment was a failure. Having relied on the ally that science had given them, and counted on its all-powerful assistance,

fear reigned over them when its help was found to be useless.

To the mind of Mr. Westland and his assistants who were on the spot, there could be but one explanation,— the British had changed the chemical proportions of their powder.

At the risk of involving their own men who lined the earthworks to the north, the Force was changed; it ran the gamut of its projecting power — there was no result. No tremendous explosions rent the silent morning air. Silently and irresistibly the long lines approached. Just at daylight a few American guns near the river puffed out their clouds of blue-white smoke, and one or two old-fashioned shells went tearing out toward the woodland; but in almost every case they failed to explode. Where the British lines had halted to re-form was beyond the range of the old Springfield rifles. Hurried orders had been sent to the great reserve army of the Americans, waiting miles in the rear of the railway, to push forward at once to the river. The Force was turned off as useless. Science appeared to be defeated.

The guards had joined in the onward sweep, and being fresher than the others, had gone on in the lead. Despite the presence of five thousand mounted men, it was expected that it would be an

infantryman's fight — the men with the bayonets were to bear the brunt. But every moment's delay spelled added danger. Officers were galloping here and there, up and down the line, shouting orders and imprecations. They spoke the language of the old red-coated days, when men met eye to eye, when butt and point were plied and hilt rang to blade.

At six o'clock the Americans, waiting in the trenches, heard a sound that called them to their feet. A clicking of the great locks went down their lines, as the prolonged roaring of the British cheer came to them. And following it, bursting from the woods, came the men on horseback. The sun was up, the day was clear and cool. A mile of open meadow land stretched before them. It was like a picture of the olden times, — the flashing of the swords, the undulating sweep of the on-coming, madly galloping chargers — the Household regiments, Dragoons, Hussars, and the mounted men from the colonies! Weapons, that for years had been only used for parade and show, were called forth to do their bloody work. It lacked but the colour, the tossing plumes and brilliant uniforms, with which the horsemen of Old England had so often charged before, to be the older day!

But the men in their gray-green khaki were of the same old stock. The thundering of the

hoofs, muffled in the soft sod, mingled with the shouts of the riders. Long before they were within range, the American trenches were hid in a haze of smoke. The din raised by the old Springfields overwhelmed the crackling reports of the few Krag-masons that had already joined the first line of defence, coming from the south. They were the only ones that wrought destruction amid the advancing line.

Now, behind the horses, appeared the infantry, a mile at the double quick before them. Despite the night's marching, lightly laden as they were, they jogged forward over the meadow ground, torn and cut by the hoofs of the mounted men ahead. The line of blue white fog seemed to cast no spell of fear upon them. The few shells that hurtled over them, or burst among their ranks, did not turn them. Line after line they emerged from the shelter of the woods; like a freshet swelling over the crest of a crumbling dike, they swept and eddied on.

The Americans, firing through the blinding mist of their own smoke, saw close upon them the shattered first ranks come. The horses plunged at the embankments; in an instant the slashing sabres were among them. The men in the intrenchments were crumpled and thrown back; and now came the infantry, tumbling and stumbling forward through the haze of sulphu-

rous-smelling mist. They swept pell-mell over earthwork and ditch, and the cheering rose again, as the rearmost, swarming on, found their comrades victorious in possession. Prisoners were everywhere; guns had been taken as they had been at Sevastopol and Inkerman; and more wonderful to relate, losses had been small — only the first line had suffered and, without a shot being fired at them, the regiments not in the vanguard marched out from the woods to join their victorious comrades forming in the captured intrenchments.

CHAPTER XXIV

BEFORE THE GOAL

BEFORE the British, as they turned and faced southward, forming their ranks in the rear of the line of earthwork, lay a stretch of perhaps two thousand yards of meadow, open, except for a few scattered bushes and a thicket of stunted pasture pines at the river brink. Then came the steep descent of crumbling bank, and below it the stream with the water running very low, owing to the continued drought — so low in fact was it that in many places it was hardly knee-deep in the shallows.

On the summit of the south bank, that was exactly on a level with that of the north, ran the line of the mysterious railway. The men pointed it out to one another as their officers sifted them into order. Some who had been in the first charge were yet panting hard from their run through the heavy ground; many, completely exhausted, sat or reclined against the mounds of freshly dug earth.

A babble of conversation, badinage, and laugh-

ter ran up and down the line. Like many brave doings when successful, the ease of accomplishment seemed the first thing that struck them. But they did not stop to reason over it any more than they had stopped to reason when regiment after regiment to a man had volunteered for one of the most daring deeds of history.

The strangeness of the immediate and existing situation did not occur to many of the rank and file either. Most of them were too busy with the after-battle chattering, too absorbed in their own elation, in their excited little tales of the action, to think much of the work ahead. To them the victory half won was won entirely. The hardest part was over. Even some of the officers shared in this feeling; a few of the younger ones gave free expression of it among themselves. The small number of casualties offset the small number of prisoners taken, and it was remarkable, indeed, that there were so few — they numbered less than five hundred, including the wounded. But many of the Americans had apparently escaped across the river, leaving behind them their arms, as the large number of loose Springfields attested.

It was to be an infantryman's fight entirely now — the rest of it. The cavalry were to be dismounted and the horses left behind; it would have been impossible for them to climb the steep southern bank; elbow and knee were needed for

the upward scramble. The old black powder rifles were collected, but diligent search disclosed but few cartridges; the prisoners declared that they possessed but *ten rounds per man* at the beginning of the fight!

Lord Montague, standing in front of his regiment, was talking with his adjutant, and pointing out the fact that most of the heavy firing had come from across the river, when Major Townley approached. The major was in a hurry, his face was redder than usual, and he appeared cross and irritated.

"We are not to go in for some minutes, sir," he blurted; "seems to be some delay bringing up that bottled ammunition — and now the men are prime for it; look at them. In a few minutes no one knows what may happen."

"Confound the delay," muttered Lord Montague; "I don't like it any better than you do, and I don't like this confounded silence, either. Why the devil aren't they firing on us? We are in plain sight and easy range. Give me anything but this rotten suspense — a few minutes more of it and I'll be jumpy as a cat."

"They say the Yankees have deserted their railway, abandoned everything, and bunked back to the main army," broke in the adjutant. "They were too sure of the effects of their old electron. But if we don't hurry, they'll all be back again.

Hullo, here come the mules. Where the devil have they been all this time?"

Trotting out from the wood came four or five hundred pack animals, and following them two or three score of light wagons. A battery of artillery swept along with them. Soon with all at a gallop and with many cries and loud cracking of whips, the strange cavalcade came rushing up at top speed to where the lines were waiting.

Strapped to the back of each mule were great glass jars with glass and rubber stoppers. They were filled with cartridge cases carefully packed in pine sawdust. Safe for the time being were they from the effects of the mysterious Force. Many of the jars contained guncotton for mining, with fuses attached for quick firing; others held powder and shell for the artillery. Originally they had contained methylated spirits and acids before they had been converted into safe receptacles for the dangerous explosives.

Now was explained the number of men with roughly made, gigantic pliers and nippers, with the handles wound with strips of insulating rubber tape, and the scores of engineers with clumsy rubber gloves and rubber sea boots. Electrical sappers they might be called — picked men of experience who well understood the dangers of live wires and loose currents. There had been plenty of thought back of the madness after all.

"There goes the advance!" exclaimed Major Townley, as a bugle rang clear and loud. "I hope the men remember the instructions about avoiding the wires and metals. Now they'll be upon us, mark my words. It's lucky we discovered that they were afraid to bring their own bally powder into the — what d'ye call it?"

"Zone of Force," replied the adjutant. "It is the only thing that made such a wild expedition as this possible. But our new powder is too much like theirs, the reports say. 'Sauce for the goose, sauce for the gander.' But I don't like this silence, not a bit of it. Wish they'd open the ball with their old smokers, we'd know what they were up to." He paused a moment with his glasses to his eyes. "Do you notice those white dots there, among those farther trees?" he asked suddenly; "looks like a line of washing."

"More like a —" began the colonel, stopping short at the word "cemetery," as he judged under the circumstances it might be somewhat suggestive and in rather bad taste; "more like a — er — what-you-may-call-it. . . . Brave fellows those," he continued, changing the subject and pointing out toward the river where a thin, undulating line of broad backs showed here and there among the bushes, as the advanced line of skirmishers pressed forward. "See the kilties in the centre? There are three of them 'way, 'way ahead of the others;

and there go some mounted men out on the right, and not a shot yet. What the devil does it mean? That bank is not deserted. No, by the Lord Harry; it's black with men! Here, Townley, take my glasses; they're very powerful. See to the left of those bushes and at the foot of those big pines; it's alive with the Yankees! See their heads?"

"By Jove, those fellows of ours have halted," murmured the adjutant, in a thrilling whisper. "Something's up."

"Heaven help us, for a pack of mad idiots," groaned the major; "now we're in for it!"

But not a sound or a movement came from the enemy. The men in the ranks had stopped talking and were watching those who had gone on to draw the fire. They slapped at the clouds of black flies that circled round their heads and faces, and swore softly and nervously, for the silence and the tension were beginning to tell on every one.

It was with a feeling of relief that they moved forward at the sound of the bugle again and the chorus of shouted orders down the line.

It was contrary to precedent, it was contrary to lessons of the past, it was against all rules of modern warfare — that advance into the open! But all rules had been broken before on that day; the times had stepped back to 1860, when mass met

mass, and men who fought on one side saw the faces of the men who fought on the other. It was steel to steel, eye to eye once more — bold heart and strong arm again.

Despite the feeling that, do his best, Lord Montague could not smother, that it would all end in ultimate disaster, he and the others who saw it felt their hearts beat high with pride. Although it was intended that some attempt at open order should be made, for five miles in length as if at some great review, on the army swept in two lines of grayish green. From end to end it was all visible. The attack was centred on the banks directly before them. No flanking movement was possible. On the west and north the rising ground came down in steep cliffs to where the river ran in deep and swirling pools, opening out into the shallow toward which the troops were marching. Only a frontal attack was possible; only a mad, fierce rush would carry it home!

Two hundred — three hundred yards they went, and the first lines opened out in extended order, the men on a trot now; on the right the whole line had broken forward — the charge had actually begun. Officers were ahead in the old-fashioned way; the sergeants called to the men to "close up, close up," as if they were their own ancestors come to life again. In the heat of the summer morning, with the blue sky over them, thirty-five

thousand British soldiers swept on as they of the old red coats had done! Grand, grand it was! But no burst of rolling powder smoke greeted them. Not a sound came from the silent bank of the river. Many an officer actually shivered from the horrible unreality. Better the burst of smoke, better the hail of bullets, better almost anything than the sound that suddenly filled the air! Shrieking, bellowing, wailing, roaring, and humming to the north rose the bursting breath of steam. The silence of the woodland was broken by the mighty screaming of the brazen throats; the warning voices of the Force were speaking once again. All the factory towns in all the world were sounding noon, it seemed; deep-booming whistles of the fog-bound coast, strident sirens of the river boats, joined with them, and the deafening chorus drowned the cheer which had begun to lift the hearts of the attackers.

It all stopped short, stopped as suddenly as if it had been one voice; but the hills still rang with the echo of the mighty clamour. Just then one of the movable houses slid into sight and sailed off down the track, disappearing at last in the forest. The attack had half halted in its mad rush; men dropped from a run into a walk. Some stood still with frightened looks, others crouched as if in fear of the smiling sky above them. On the bank stood the advance line motionless. Apparently

from the very centre of the stream a great white flag was slowly tossing to and fro. The opposite side was crowded now with thousands of silent figures, standing as if idle spectators of the scene.

The lines struggled slowly forward; the men, bewildered, no longer kept together; regiments became mixed and intermingled. Somewhere a bugle called "Halt!" Some said it came from the American side. On the right where the charge had been most impetuous there was a confused, huddling mob, some pressing forward, others back.

On almost every tree and shrub were hung large flaring posters; a line of them decorated a low rail fence.

Plain for all to read was the following: —

WARNING

DO NOT *CROSS* THE RIVER.

DO NOT COME IN *CONTACT* WITH THE *WATER*.

CHAPTER XXV

CHAOS

THERE was a narrow suspension foot-bridge connecting one bank with another, swung between the stone piers that once had supported the railway trestle. On the centre pier stood a man of large stature, swinging the great white flag from side to side. Behind him were grouped ten or twelve American officers, one a general in full uniform. Below, half submerged in the river, was the body of a Highlander, and lying at the water's edge another. An excited man in the same uniform was talking loudly, surrounded by an ever increasing circle of listeners.

"McDonald and Munro, they kept gien an, nat stoppin' to read. Jock was a puir scholar. They run doon the bank, reached ta watter, and Jock gae a jump like a shot hare, and doon he went, and Munro taks hold o' his fut ta pull him oot; and doon he went, and there lie the twa of 'em stane dead. Keep awa' frae it, I tell 'ee! Keep awa'!"

The strange thing about the whole scene was the fact that it was enacted in full view, almost

within earshot, of the multitude on the southern bank. They looked on with a keen interest at the spectacle. Certainly their appearance was not belligerent, in fact, it was hardly martial, although some carried rifles. But above them at the top of the railway embankment the sun glinted on a row of machine-guns, and a masked battery of field-pieces was on each side of the foot-bridge. To have opened fire upon the confused mass of British soldiery before them would have been like slaughtering crippled water-fowl in a pool.

"Deuced awkward this," muttered Major Townley to one of the captains of the grenadiers. "I suppose there's nothing to do, eh?"

"It's devilish ridiculous," rejoined the captain; and to the surprise of the major he burst into a fit of ill-controlled laughter. "Do," he managed to repeat at last, "I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to sit down and stare those beggars out of countenance; turn about is fair play."

The captain walked forward and, calmly seating himself on the river bank, took out his field-glasses.

"Hullo, there's a chap I used to know," he said. "Played polo against him at Newport last year — forgotten his name. One, two, three, four — " he calmly began to count the guns in the battery opposite.

The madness was over. Out of the disorderly ranks some order at last was being sifted. The regiments were formed in long lines among the bushes and on the edge of the bank, and then brought to a parade rest. Some looked foolish, some grinned frankly back at the grinning faces opposite them. Only a few frowned. But on the right a tragedy had been averted. A man who had picked up a Springfield rifle, incensed at what he thought was a taunting gesture from an American private in his shirt-sleeves, levelled the piece. An officer knocked it from his hand; it was with difficulty that he was rescued from his companions. What might have happened had that shot been fired no one could have told. The temper of either side could have been changed in an instant; the good-natured curiosity with which they respectfully regarded one another might have been suddenly swept away in the apparently forgotten fact that they were enemies. But now there was neither rancour nor bitterness. It was impossible to realize that only a short time before they had been fighting, cutting, and slashing each other in the meadow. The fact seemed to have slipped their memory. If it had not been for the separating influence of the deadly stream (the bodies of one or two horses that had been driven into it on the right attested to its quality), they would have mingled freely.

But an end, of course, had to be made to the unusual situation. General Lord Armathwaite, in charge of the expedition, who had been sent for, came riding up from the rear. His face was pale and he was evidently nervous. The forlorn hope that he had been so proud to command and whose preliminary dash had been so successful, had been turned suddenly into a condition of affairs new to military teaching; it presented a problem so delicate and peculiar that the general was confused. Even the etiquette to be followed in the matter was an embarrassing question, especially as it was the American commander-in-chief, Major-General Goddard himself, who was waiting to see him. Accompanied by a few officers and three or four civilians, the general had crossed the foot-bridge under cover of the flag of truce, and stood chatting with some of the British officers.

As the two leaders approached, the others drew apart. Lord Armathwaite dismounted, gave his horse to an orderly, and took General Goddard's extended hand.

"We need no introduction, sir," said the American, smiling; "some years ago I was military attaché at London."

"And you arranged that shoot for me in the Rockies in 1905. Good heavens, Goddard, I haven't forgotten you!" exclaimed Lord Armathwaite. "This is a confounded funny meeting.

What — er — are we going to do about it? I suppose, as you say in poker, you have — er — the '*call*' — is that the word?"

General Goddard paused and dug at the root of a little pine with his walking-stick.

"Why," he said, "let's just show down our hands then, to carry on your simile, and divide the pot, eh? There is no bluffing to be done, and that is what military diplomacy generally consists of. The game is ended so far as we two are concerned. Let us see how we stand. You can't go on."

"No," acquiesced the Englishman. "We can't fly — that's certain."

"But you can march back, I suppose?"

"Then you don't intend to demand a surrender?"

"No; to tell the truth it would only make a lot of bother. Of course it isn't military; but —" the general shrugged his shoulders, "it isn't a military affair; it's commercially scientific — sort of a civilian-manager business; we've stepped down and out. That tall individual you saw with me is Westland; he is general superintendent, who acts under orders of the directors. The President is commander-in-chief of the police — that's us; but he isn't a military man, and is represented generally by the Vice-President, Mr. Crantz. He's up on the bank over there; and

he is running the campaign on a business basis now; but he's not sparing any expense."

"The whole thing's been an awful blunder, Goddard."

"Oh, I don't know. I never read of a war that some *good* didn't grow out of it, first or last. But —" the general just restrained himself from putting his hand on his companion's shoulder in his earnestness, "by George, that was a great charge of yours! I'll never forget it. Lord, it made me proud of the race. Think of it — coming out of there in the old-fashioned way! We couldn't believe our eyes! We never expected to leave any men in that first trench yonder. But you came in so quick that we could not get them out, and had to turn the current into the water half an hour before we believed it would be necessary. It was magnificent — that charge!"

"'But it was not war,' to use the trite old phrase," said Lord Armathwaite, sadly. "When did you know we were coming?"

"From the minute you started. When there came no response to the electrical projection, we were somewhat concerned and began calling up the reserves. Then Westland turned the Force into the river."

"Your reserves were in readiness?"

"Not far away."

"But the paper, *The Voice*, that gave the

plans of the railway and fortifications, stated that there were not more than twenty thousand its full length."

"That article was well censored. There are nearly two hundred thousand back here five miles or so now and about fifty thousand along the line."

"Well, again may I ask what you intend doing?" requested the English general, somewhat wearily.

"It is supposed that you will all be sailing for England in about a fortnight," General Goddard replied, "and the harbours you now hold are capital places for embarking."

"So I will march my men back again, eh?"

"Perhaps it would be better, general."

"We haven't gained much by this silly war, have we?" asked Lord Armathwaite, half smiling. "Come now, have we?"

"Oh, a little common-sense in some subjects over here," responded General Goddard. "We've needed something in that line badly for a long time."

"Well, so did we, I am growing to believe. There are no more formalities to be undertaken between you and myself, are there, general?"

"Not that I know of. Only one thing — I'd have all the ammunition out of the camp by Thursday next if I were you, or I'd keep a long

way from it. Westland is advancing the Force about a mile a day, he says."

"Goddard."

"Yes?"

"I see the beginning of the end of our profession."

"Well, let it come in if it assures peace for all. I am willing to turn my sword into a ploughshare any time. They will be retiring me in a few years anyhow."

"Are there any negotiations going on between our two Governments?"

"That is more than I can tell you, general."

The two officers strolled back together. Lord Armathwaite spoke a few words to his staff, and in ten minutes the British forces were in motion. It was not a retreat; their arms were at the shoulder, and the Highland pipes were playing as they marched away. At the intrenchments they picked up the ammunition mules, part of the cavalry and the guns, and leaving the few prisoners they had taken to take care of the still fewer American wounded, they carried their own back with them, and soon the rear-guard had entered the woods.

One thing happened that is worth recording, however. Before the army had progressed a mile, one of the ammunition mules took it in his head to run away and, plunging down the steep bank

of a stream, fell among the stones and broke the old vitriol bottle he was carrying. The released ammunition — cartridges for the small caliber machine-gun — blew up instanter, showing that the Force was still in action. Only the firm discipline of the troops prevented the end of the march being turned into a rush for safety.

It was late in the evening when the tired regiments reached camp. Again the lights at headquarters burned late. The field-marshal was in direct communication with the war office in London. Important doings were promised for the morrow.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE EBBING TIDE

The Voice and *The Verdict* had a great opportunity to shout in spread heads over the "repulse" of the British forlorn hope at the river bank, and to burst into pages of descriptive heroics and patriotic vapourings. It was most certainly expected that the press at large would set the eagle screaming at top voice. Here was a magnificent opening for the display of red ink and exultant rhetoric. But nothing of the sort followed. If it had been attempted, it would have fallen as flat as the publication of a chapter from Xenophon or a transcript from Cæsar's "Commentaries." The affair was passed over as a "reconnoissance in force, followed by negotiations."

The next day came the news that London and Washington were in direct communication.

Field-Marshal Lord Trevelyan had received news of an armistice at daybreak following close upon a night of chaos and indecision. The withdrawal of the fleet to a position fifty miles out at sea, under orders cabled from the admi-

ralty via Halifax and the wireless station ships, had left his forces in a still more difficult position. The unarmed transports remaining were not sufficient to embark one-fourth of the great army that was crowded closely in toward the sea.

But now the tension that everybody within the limits of the cordon felt over the critical situation was lessened by the grateful information. The cheers of absolute relief that echoed from one end of the great camp to the other awoke strange sensations in the breasts of the officers. There was no disgrace attending their position; they had done their best and had every right to be proud of their efforts and of the conduct of their men. But living in the crater of a slumbering volcano was no pleasant existence, and they suddenly became alive to the present reality, with a shudder at their own past danger.

For three days at least they could breathe in safety if not comfort; for that was the time agreed upon that they should not move beyond their own intrenchments, and during this period it was understood that the Force should not be advanced.

On the second day of the truce, the football team of the Highland brigade played a picked fifteen from the guards. The affair, all but the result, was a prearranged one — a suddenly "put-up game," on the part of the officers, in order to

give the men something to think about and to talk over and to take their minds off their surroundings. It was an attempt to relieve the situation of its insistent unreality.

It was a great success. From the side hills that had been turned into grandstands, thousands and thousands of his Britannic Majesty's soldiers watched their sweltering comrades (the day was very warm) struggle for the mastery in the meadow. The British private had not changed an iota; he was still the same as the previous generations had made him, — he forgot his troubles, ceased to realize his danger, or his unusual position, in the mere fact that he was amused. With something to occupy his mind or his hands, and plenty to drink and eat, he dwelt not on cause or glory, and was the child again — a very simple child and quite lovable in his simplicity. As proud as of yore he was of his regiment, and jealous of its good name and its honour. But he fought, as he always had fought, without hatred or malice, and with only an unthinking and dogged determination to follow where his officers might lead him and to bring "ours" well to the fore. International policies or questions involved no more bothered his head than his position in regard to latitude or longitude, which meant to him hot weather or cold, dry throat or soaking skin. As this day was bright and there was a ball

being kicked about and a few shillings to be wagered, he was happy.

In the clear sunlight, from the top of the highest hill, a great British ensign was flowing. It looked down upon the peaceful scene proudly and happily. Yes, proudly and happily, it fluttered its folds above the useless guns parked in the pastures and woodlands, over the stacks of idle rifles before the tents, in the company streets, over the empty caissons and ammunition wagons stripped of their loads of shells and cases — over a perfectly helpless army.

The field-marshal, standing before the veranda of his headquarters on the hill, — a neat, white farmhouse with green blinds and climbing rose vines, — looked up at the flag and sighed. It was almost a sigh of relief. The weight of responsibility had been lifted from his shoulders. The war office and his Government had taken up the burden. He did not know what they were saying, or what messages were passing between the two capitals, but one thing he felt deeply, — he would hate to see that flag come down. If he was instructed to surrender his force, it would almost break his brave old heart to watch the colours reach the ground. Bitter, indeed, would be the feelings inspired by seeing another take its place. The cheers from the spectators of the game reached him; the band of the Buffs was playing

a popular melody, "Marching up Pall Mall"; voices joined in the swelling chorus. Would they feel like singing if the flag came down? Would they march up Pall Mall in the same old way if —

"Wireless message for you, sir," broke in one of his aides, interrupting his thoughts. "Just came from the American headquarters at the river." He handed the commander-in-chief a big blue envelope. "Rather important, I should take it, sir," he added, following the field-marshal's glance to the top of the flagstaff.

"Very good, Carrington," replied the field-marshal. "This will be a momentous day for England."

"And for America too," answered the young aide, who had been promoted to the staff but recently, and consequently was not in the condition of permanent awe. "The papers have come into the lines in the usual way — seems to me the Yankees must know we get hold of 'em. Washington seems to be a bit upset at Germany's behaviour in South America — quite an article on the subject."

There was no reply, and he followed his chief into the house.

Besides his doubt in regard to the conditions that he might be forced to accept, the British commander was ignorant of a great many other things that had to deal with affairs and senti-

ments beyond those concerning himself or his position.

He did not know that the American public no longer danced in the streets in the fervour of "patriotic" rejoicing; that the citizens no longer fell into each other's arms at "glorious news from the front." They had begun to think, as a people will when recovering from a national malady; the hour of delirium was over and, with the return of reason, they went back to the beginning and sought the cause. Finding little, they had marvelled greatly and wondered at their own behaviour.

Naturally, of course, they found themselves asking questions. Business depression was everywhere; ruin in all directions; a feeling of uncertainty in the future; a total loss of foreign trade; scarcity of money, scarcity of work, a plethora of would-be workers, and millions of hungry mouths; and when the whole was summed up — *cui bono!* Some one was to blame; so the press blamed the Government (in which they were ably assisted by some ex-members), the Government blamed the people, and the people blamed the press. But something had to be done; there was certainly no use standing about pointing with accusing forefingers. It was small comfort reading, at this late hour, the words of Edward Norton, for instance; he had asked all these questions before a

dollar had been spent or a drop of blood been shed. And another thing contributed to the growing discontent and to the lack of popularity of the conflict. To few people had the war come home, it was true; the casualties, in proportion to the numbers involved, had been slight. The great and popular generals of history, for the most part, strange to say, had been the greatest butchers; a victory was valuable in a nation's memory in proportion to its cost. Long lists of killed and wounded seemed necessary to the maintenance of a national warlike spirit. But with the introduction of the huge war solver, the Force, the spectacular part of an international conflict was gone. The uncertainty of news had destroyed public interest very early in the war in Manchuria. Now the certainty of the result had the same effect. (There is small interest in watching a chess game two moves before checkmate.) The disaster that might have overwhelmed the invading army in Maine (if it had occurred) would have revolted the minds of the populace; the stories of just and liberal treatment of prisoners and wounded on both sides had created a subtle sympathy between American and Britisher. The appearance of prisoners on parole was the signal for friendly applause or kindly greeting. No rancour was felt at the regaining of the British property at Vancouver and British Columbia by the expeditions from

India and Australia; the lack of a naval force in the Pacific was a sufficient explanation. So, like a sick person reviving under drastic treatment, the American nation was awakening to many things to which its past fever had blinded it.

It was suddenly discovered that the very people who had been against the war at the first (or who had been in no way responsible for its beginning) had suffered even more than the rest, a hundred times more than the multitude of *Voice* readers and voice raisers. The unwarlike people at the beginning had done more than their share of fighting in the end. Now they were almost entirely in control. The fomenters of the bitterness, the jingoes and war-whoopers, had disappeared from positions of importance. The people were tired, sick and tired, of the whole unhappy business; mortally wearied of the dreary, profitless game.

The prophets had their innings at this juncture, of course, and the "I-told-you-sos," whose name was legion, rejoiced perhaps more than was seemly in their ancient reasoning.

Only the trite fact that England had kept up her communication with her colonies, and that they had stood manfully by her as members of the great British Commonwealth, had saved her from starvation or the bitter humiliation of having to beg from her jealous European neighbours, who would have delighted in her downfall. Her navy

had saved her in one way, and the necessity for its supremacy under the old conditions had been proved beyond cavilling. Her shores had been free from invasion and her people fed. But her merchant marine — what had become of it? Her manufacturing industries, except those devoted to providing warlike necessities, had collapsed almost beyond hope of revival from lack of custom and dearth of raw material. The cloud of her national debt almost obscured the sun of her prosperity. Her effort had been magnificent; but to what end? The invasion of America had been fruitless, as every writer who had given thought to the subject had prophesied; and the great unexpected result or, better, development, the value of which was an unknown quantity, had been the one thing that had been worked to the top of the caldron.

Science had rendered military advancement worthless, fighting had gone back to first principles — and first principles were obsolete. Gunpowder was useless; the school of sword and buckler had vanished; archery was dead — to revive it ridiculous; and these things belonged now to the age of romance — an age that had gone forever with the decay of the symptoms of barbarism.

So the word that fluttered through the air that day and was brought to the field-marshal, as he opened the blue envelope, spelled great things for

the world — great things that afterward grew to be greater in the very ease of their accomplishment. But this brings us back to the little white farmhouse almost in the shadow of the flag.

The field-marshal looked at the despatch, cabled from London via Washington direct. Although the news was welcome in lifting the horror from him, yet again his spirits sank, for the mantle of responsibility had once more settled upon his shoulders.

"Upon your making terms, peace will be declared — full authority given you to act — all troops to be returned to England within a fortnight."

Thus read the short despatch. It seemed almost foolish in its terseness. No hint of how to open negotiations, no instructions, no limits imposed upon him; only the information that he was to be the representative of his Government, and that the decision lay with him. It was not like the war office to leave any one, even a field-marshal, so unhampered, when it was possible to get him at the end of a wire, and it was puzzling to account for the change in time-honoured customs. But as it now was his duty to accept the responsibility, he would not shirk it.

"Is the American camp in communication with us?" he asked the aide standing in the doorway.

"Yes, sir; the receiving recorder is now working. We are getting a message from General Goddard, sir," returned the aide. "Quite an important one — will have it in, in a minute, sir."

The field-marshal sat patiently waiting. The cheers rang up again from the hillside — the Kilties had made another goal.

A telegraph orderly handed a despatch to the aide, who stepped forward and placed it on the field-marshal's desk. The latter looked up quickly.

"General Goddard and the 'committee,' whoever they are, are on their way here," he said; and forthwith he gave orders for his own generals to assemble at headquarters.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE MINGLING OF THE COLOURS

In the rear seats of a large electric motor that was gliding along the road toward the English camp there was a party of seven well-known men. Nicholas Westland sat next to a tall man in the undress uniform of a general, and on his other side was a strongly built, thick-set man with eye-glasses; his age might have been hard to guess. His face was bronzed by exposure to the open air; his gray hair and grizzly mustache belied, rather, the clearness of his eye back of the glasses and the firm cut of his mouth and lower jaw. He was doing the talking and the others were listening, bending forward in his direction.

"I will tell you what it is, gentlemen," said the strong man, emphatically. "We will have to keep our eyes on Germany. I do not take much stock in this story of her having only a disinterested interest in the business welfare of her subjects along the Spanish Main. She would like to get a foothold; and if this war had continued much longer, she would have shown the

cloven hoof. That big fleet was not sent to the Caribbean for nothing. You remember in my first administration — hullo," he broke off suddenly, "what's going on here?"

The automobile had rounded a turn in the road, and suddenly swinging out of the wood came into full sight of the crowded hillsides and the game going on in the meadow.

"Football!" exclaimed the young captain, the only other one in uniform, turning back from his seat next to the chauffeur. "Well, if this doesn't beat the band!"

For a few seconds the party watched the astonishing scene in silence, then the motor car slowed gradually and suddenly came to a full stop. From each side of the road stepped a group of men in khaki, an officer was with them. He saluted and smiled pleasantly. Most of the men standing about were unarmed, but a few paces off two tall guardsmen were walking their "sentry go" with their empty rifles at the shoulder, with all the dignity of the post at St. James's. To right and left stretched a long, narrow, and neatly constructed earthwork, here and there crossed by bough shelters for the men. There were perhaps not more than a hundred in sight standing up and looking in curiosity at the black motor and its occupants in the roadway. Lashed to the side of the front seat was a small white flag;

the soldiers at sight of it began some excited whispering. As the English officer in response to a few questions pointed out the white farmhouse as the field-marshal's headquarters, the motor started again, and, at this moment, the hillsides rang with a burst of cheering — the guards had scored. As the car glided out into the open country and silently tore down the long slope of the hill, with a wide, free road before it, the multitudes caught sight of it. They rose to their feet, and the partisan cheer that had scarcely died away was nothing to the great volume of voice that lifted to the sky. Men came running down the hill to the roadside like leaves rolling before a sudden burst of wind — the automobile swept on between two lines of eager and excited faces. With but a slight checking of its speed it mounted the slope, turned, and swooping swiftly in past the gates stopped before the vine-clad portico of the farmhouse.

The field-marshal and his staff were standing as the occupants of the car descended. General Goddard and the English leader shook hands and the introductions followed. The ex-President, Mr. Taintor, Governor Landale, Mr. Westland, Edward Norton, and Mr. Thornton were successively presented. The young aide, Captain Taintor, had found a friend with whom, arm in arm, he walked away. In a few minutes

the two commanders-in-chief disappeared into the house.

There had been little or no formality in the meeting; if at first there had been a little shyness, more than embarrassment, which was perhaps natural, the conversation was restrained and, to tell the truth, commonplace until, after the expiration of a few minutes, General Goddard and the field-marshal appeared again. They walked down the steps to the edge of the grass plot. The others followed slowly.

"I don't see how we are to do it," said the Englishman, putting in his eye-glass and squinting up at the great flag that was rippling majestically a hundred feet above his head. "You see that is only a trimmed pine tree, and the — what you may call 'ems — oh, yes, the halyards jammed, so she won't come down easily."

"But we don't want it to come down, you understand," returned General Goddard. "We want to put the others up. Haven't you some one here who could climb it? It was the only stipulation, you know, and I suppose we have to carry it out."

"Where's young Carrington?" asked the field-marshal, turning. "Oh, there you are, eh? Think you can swarm up that tree yonder?"

"And take down the flag? No, sir."

The young officer flushed and saluted as he replied.

"Hold on, not so fast," replied the field-marshal. "You are to take up two other flags and —"

"Nail them there," put in General Goddard. "Ah, here they are," he continued, as Mr. Thornton began unrolling a large bundle he had taken from the motor car. "Here's what we want, and a hammer and nails, too — that's Westland's forethought."

With the eyes of the world upon him, although he did not know it, young Carrington began his upward climb. He remembered the day on the outpost when he had heard the awful explosion at the foot of the tree as he sat safely up in the branches. Now, as he looked down at the ground below him, he saw the upturned faces, and away to the south the hills thronged with waiting men — all turned his way. The road, the meadow, and the orchard were crowded with them. The hard bark scraped his wrists and knees and tore his uniform; but up, up, he went. A few stumps of branches gave him a grateful foothold near the top. The wind died down and the folds of the great flag drooped caressingly about him.

It was no easy task to unfold the bundle tied at his shoulders; to make a slip meant swift and certain death. But the nails sank easily into the soft pine wood. One after another they were driven home. Then, dropping the hammer, with

every muscle trembling from his continued exertion, he began his still perilous descent. A score of eager arms stretched up to him as, half fainting, he slid the last few feet.

The breeze that had died away suddenly awoke. From the top of the tall pine the colours sprang to life. Lifting and swelling, they swept proudly and grandly out. The crosses of St. George, St. Andrew, and St. Michael mingled with the stars and stripes, and between them, gleaming clear and distinct, the folds of a great white flag!

Peace for the nations who spoke the common tongue, whose blood was in each other's veins. Peace for the world to witness. Peace for the world to know!

For a full minute there was silence, then the shout burst forth. It lifted and tossed among the hills and down into the valleys; it swept across the meadow and over the woods, and travelled the length of the long intrenchments. Below, in the shadow of the mingled flags, stood a group of bareheaded, silent men. Down old Mr. Taintor's wrinkled cheeks a few wet streaks showed. The field-marshal's eyes were filled. Then suddenly all turned and faced the west, where the sun was going down in a veil of softly crimsoned cloud. From the far distance came a thrilling, roaring sound! It blared and screamed,

rose higher and higher in a note of mad rejoicing. The thousand whistles had it, and as their voices died to slow, filtering echoes, the American cannon took it up. They boomed and thundered in a deep half-circle beyond the blue rim of the hills. Then they, too, ceased.

Down in the meadow the band of the Buffs had struck up the air the nations shared, "God save the King," "America."

London went wild that night. Trafalgar Square was crowded. In the cities of the United States bonfires blazed and people fell into each other's arms and marched in dancing, shouting lines from street to street.

A big fleet left the waters of the Caribbean Sea and steamed past the Windward Islands headed east.

Militant Europe felt the far-reaching shadow of the mingled flags and paused half in fear, half in astonishment, and then, as they saw more clearly the white standard and its peaceful prophecy, took better heart. The conscript armies of the fatherlands saw visions wider than their barrack walls.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE WINNOWING

THERE was a group of men seated in the windows of the great white clubhouse on the avenue. All of the same faces were there that had looked out at the snowstorm that dismal Christmas Day the year gone by. But with them were some others who had not been present at the former gathering.

The thick-set man with the emphatic manner, whose portrait painted nearly a score of years before looked down from the walls, was talking.

"We will take for granted what Mr. Norton says," he observed, with a nod of his head in the direction of that gentleman's heavy figure lolling back in the arm-chair, "that all this might have happened without a war at all. Who can gainsay it? No one. The effect of a complete understanding might have nullified Mr. Westland's invention, and the court of final arbitration of questions that might produce war between civilized peoples been forced to be recognized by the combined weight and pressure of our national powers, leading toward a general disarmament and the rule of 'do unto others,' as Mr. Norton says.

The right and justice of claims, the redress of wrongs and impositions of penalties; in fact, the settlement of all international difficulties might have taken place before just such a court as is now proposed if England and America in complete understanding had proposed and insisted upon it. But it would have had to be a latent-armed insistence."

"True," returned Mr. Norton, ponderously, "but would it not have been cheaper in money, and certainly," he sighed, "in lives? If we had not discovered so soon as we did the impossibility of the continuance of any conflict, no matter by what means, think of the awful reckoning! I grant you, in turn, at first, the 'insistence' with the latent power of arms behind it. But then you must remember that neither the British Commonwealth nor ourselves depend upon our armed condition. We would have been the first to follow the advice of our own teaching, and, once established in our ideas, the other nations would have followed our example. What had we to fear?"

"But we would have been together dictators to the world," objected the first speaker.

"We are that now," assented Mr. Norton. "To the ends of justice, right, and fair play, let us hope, the world over, but only so far as we intend to establish a court of final resort, that will do away with slaughter. In the privilege of that court all

other nations have a representation and an equal share. I do not claim we have discovered Utopia. But we have stepped in the direction of 'peace on earth and good will toward men,'—a great college of universal understanding. I think we are agreed, sir; but you were going on to say—"

"Only, that our own unfortunate condition here at home, industrially and, for lack of a better word, 'socially' speaking, needed drastic treatment to effect a cure. The war did that for us. The people had to be taught, and when they desired a return to a normal national life and a cessation of hostilities which the English people were the first to perceive and feel—"

"Oh, we were jolly glad to stop, I can tell you," said a voice from the recess of the window. "You can't put that too strongly."

"But you weren't half so glad as we were, Lord Montague; we had absolutely nothing to gain. A Canadian plebiscite would, as it will now, have decided matters; the 'consent of the governed' ruling would have had to be applied in a case of a country capable of self-government such as Canada; the result would have been a foregone conclusion, as every one grants it to be now. But I hold that our internal trouble needed strong medicines."

"It needed large doses of common-sense,"

returned Mr. Norton, making, for him, a rather emphatic gesticulation. "And we were getting it as the schoolboy spoke of his floggings — 'free and frequent.' Costly in the end, self-cures generally are; but we were working the effects of our early indulgence in quackery out of our system by merely learning to leave strong medicine alone. The people would have proved at the polls, as some one here remarked before, that the bitter lesson had been learned."

"As our late President in his last speech to the labour men at Cooper Union put it," remarked Marbury Thornton, "'The best rule is the rule of the best,' in which I believe he quoted Mr. Gladstone, who, heaven knows, had the masses deep at heart."

"It was rather sad the President's taking off; his conversion to the truth, or at least to the necessities of natural laws of social life and balanced relations of industrial behaviour, was sudden; but his frank acknowledgment made his teaching as potent as St. Paul's." Mr. Norton made this last speech slowly, half to himself, as a man does who thinks out loud.

"He left behind him his monument in the 'People's Party,' to which, I think, all here belong," laughed Rice the broker. "Crantz and Landale amalgamated the Republicans — that was a strange convention, eh? — at Buffalo. Do

you remember how stocks rose, some like mushrooms that grew into oaks when once they got out of the mud? Capital appeared when a sound policy was assured and labour took its coat off."

"But don't you think that strange edition of *The Voice* and *Verdict* helped clear up matters?" asked Thornton, amusedly. "'How it might have been' should have read 'How we did it.' Of all strange persons in the world that man Whalen takes the prize. I suppose it amuses him to juggle with humanity. I hugged myself when I read that quite presumptuous semi-confession."

"He's done some rather dangerous juggling in his day," put in the ex-President; "but he played fair with us when we rented his paper for six months."

"You don't believe that rumour of his once having dickered with Germany and Russia for its control, any of you?" asked Rice, addressing the company. "In his clever 'How it might have been done,' he hints at such a possibility. The idea of such a publication as his warning the people about being misled by subsidized news sheets! It makes me laugh."

"Oh, he was in for money, power, and amusement, the same as many, only he took it in peculiar fashion," returned Thornton. "Who

was it said he looked as if he had 'a joke on the universe'?"

No one replied, for just then a waiter approached with a card on a salver.

"For Captain Taintor," he said.

A young man who had been sitting half abstracted on the edge of the gathering took up the bit of pasteboard.

"'Edgar Stannard, New York, *Daily Voice*.' I suspect it's a reporter to ask about the wedding. I thought Emery would attend to all that sort of thing. I've been putting 'em off on him for the last two days."

"Better see him, Charles," suggested the ex-ambassador to his nephew; "perhaps Whalen sent him up. Just at present we owe his paper a little politeness."

The young man with a shrug of his shoulders left the lounging-room.

"Fine fellow that," remarked Admiral Howarth; "I congratulate you, sir, on your future son-in-law." He turned as he spoke, and addressed a soldierly looking man of fifty who sat opposite him. "Ah, here's that belated round of libations — comes of Rice's inventing new cocktails. Gentlemen, I propose Colonel Carntyne's health."

"And here's to the bride," echoed old Mr. Taintor.

"And the alliance," rejoined the soldierly man, quietly.

Every one followed Edward Norton's example as he rose.

"The alliance, if you wish it so," he repeated in a low, heart-felt voice. "There is a good sound in that word, my friends. Here's to the rule of peace, the sway of justice, and the dawn of common-sense. Let us forget forever the Unpardonable War!"

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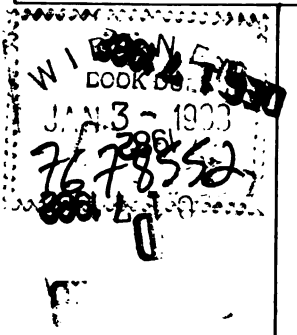

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